THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

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BY

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WITH MAPS.

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PREFACE.

THE present work is only a partial realization of an old-standing project of mine, for it is now some ten or twelve years since I made collections for, and actually began a history of England up to the Norman Conquest. This work, however, was interrupted by the preparation of my *Short History*, and has since been further delayed by my revision and expansion of that book; and now that my hands are free the state of my health forbids my carrying out this earlier plan in its full extent. I have thought it better, therefore, to gather up and complete what I could of the history of the earlier times up to the union of England under Ecgberht, and this the more because these years form a distinct period in our national history whose interest and importance has I think still to be fully recognized. They form in fact the period of the Making of England, the age during which our fathers conquered and settled over the soil of Britain, and in which their political and social life took the form

which it still retains.   The centuries of administrative
organization which stretch from Ecgberht to Edward
the First, the age of full national development which
extends from Edward's day to our own, only become
intelligible to us when we have fully grasped this
age of national formation.   I cannot but feel, there-
fore, that it is no slight misfortune that such a
period should remain comparatively unknown, and
that its struggles, which were in reality the birth-
throes of our national life, should be still to most
Englishmen, as they were to Milton, mere battles of
kites and of crows.

Whether I have succeeded in setting these
struggles in a truer and a more interesting light,
my readers must decide.   The remoteness of the
events, the comparative paucity of historical materials,
no doubt make such an undertaking at the best a
hazardous one; and one of the wisest of my friends,
who is at the same time the greatest living authority
on our early history, warned me at the outset against
the attempt to construct a living portraiture of times
which so many previous historians, themselves men
of learning and ability, had left dead.   Nothing but
my own vivid interest in the subject could have
encouraged me in spite of such a warning to attempt
to convey its interest to others.   In doing so, how-
ever, I have largely availed myself of some resources
which have been hitherto, I think, unduly neglected.

Archæological researches on the sites of villas and towns, or along the line of road or dyke, often furnish us with evidence even more trustworthy than that of written chronicle ; while the ground itself, where we can read the information it affords, is, whether in the account of the Conquest or in that of the Settlement of Britain, the fullest and the most certain of documents. Physical geography has still its part to play in the written record of that human history to which it gives so much of its shape and form ; and in the present work I have striven, however imperfectly, to avail myself of its aid. Even Bæda has supplied me with new material. Freely as he has been used for the ecclesiastical and political history of his time, the social information which lies scattered up and down his work has been left comparatively untouched. Bæda was no Gregory of Tours ; the seclusion of his life, and his relation to the race whose history he drew, precluded him from giving us such a picture of our forefathers as the bishop-statesman of Tours was enabled by his position and the difference of his Roman blood to give of the Frankish conquerors of Gaul. But, in spite of this, Bæda incidentally tells us much, and a careful gleaning of these incidental facts gives us at any rate glimpses into the social life of England in the seventh and eighth centuries which can hardly fail to make the time more real to us.

The maps, in which I have endeavoured for the
first time to trace the boundaries of the various
English powers at different epochs, will no doubt be
found in some respects susceptible of correction. The
grounds on which the main lines of division are
drawn I have stated in my book;—what I wish to
explain here is, that in some of the minor details
of these maps I have been driven by the absence of
information to rely on what seemed to me the proba-
bilities o things, or the natural conclusion to be
drawn from other facts of the time. This is especially
the case in the boundary line between the English
and the Britons. The battle of Deorham brought
the conquerors to the Severn, while in Wulfhere's
day they had reached the western border of Hereford-
shire; but there is nothing to tell us by what steps
during the century that elapsed they had advanced
from the one point to the other. Under these circum-
stances I could only represent them in the maps that
touched on the intervening period as advancing
gradually from the Severn to the Wye. We are in
the same utter darkness as to the advance of the
English over the upper valley of the Severn. At
the end of the sixth century, their March or border-
land only reached to the line of water-parting which
forms the eastern boundary of that vale, and we hear
nothing of their advance over it till almost the close
of the eighth century, when the conquests of Offa

carry their frontier to Offa's Dyke on the west of
Shropshire. Here, however, the map itself helps us.
Cheshire had become English at the beginning of the
seventh century, while Herefordshire was English by
the middle of it, and a glance at the map will show
how inevitably these two facts imply a corresponding
advance of the intervening frontier, as I have drawn
it, to the course of the Severn. In the same way
we have hardly anything to throw light on the
advance of the West-Saxons across Dorsetshire. All
we know is, that it could not have begun till about
the middle of the sixth century, and that it was
certainly completed by the beginning of the eighth.
Difficulties of another kind presented themselves
in accurately defining the political relations of one
or two of the smaller states, such as Sussex or Essex,
about which through long periods of time we have
little or no information. Here I have been compelled
to assume that their political course during the
years in which it is unknown to us was mainly the
same as in the years in which it is known ;—in other
words, that when not known to be subject to any
other power, Sussex owned the supremacy of the
West-Saxons, and Essex followed the fortunes of
East-Anglia.

I may add, in explanation of the reappearance of
a few passages, relating principally to ecclesiastical
matters, which my readers may have seen before, that

where I had little or nothing to add or to change I have preferred to insert a passage from previous work, with the requisite corrections and references, to the affectation of rewriting such a passage for the mere sake of giving it an air of novelty.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

MENTONE, *November,* 1881.

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THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

BRITAIN AND ITS FOES.

THE island of Britain was the latest of Rome's conquests in the west. Though it had been twice attacked by Julius Cæsar, his withdrawal and the inaction of the earlier Emperors promised it a continued freedom ; but a hundred years after Cæsar's landing, Claudius undertook its conquest, and so swiftly was the work carried out by his generals and those of his successor that before thirty years were over the bulk of the country had passed beneath the Roman sway.[1] The island was thus fortunate in the moment of its conquest. It was spared the pillage and exactions which ruined the

[1] In these few introductory pages I need scarcely say that I do not attempt to write a history of Roman Britain. Such a history, indeed, can hardly be attempted with any profit till the scattered records of researches amongst the roads, villas, tombs, etc., of this period have been in some way brought together and made accessible. What I attempt is simply to note those special features of the Roman rule which have left their impress on our after history.

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provinces of Rome under the Republic, while it felt
little of the evils which still clung to their administra-
tion under the earlier Empire. The age in which its
organization was actively carried out was the age of
the Antonines, when the provinces became objects of
special care on the part of the central govern-
ment,[1] and when the effects of its administration
were aided by peace without and a profound tran-
quillity within. The absence of all record of the
change indicates the quietness and ease with which
Britain was transformed into a Roman province.
A census and a land-survey must have formed
here, as elsewhere, indispensable preliminaries for
the exaction of the poll-tax and the land-tax which
were the main burdens of Rome's fiscal system.
Within the province the population would, in accord-
ance with her invariable policy, be disarmed; while
a force of three legions was stationed, partly in the
north to guard against the unconquered Britons, and
partly in the west to watch over the tribes which
still remained half subdued. Though the towns were
left in some measure to their own self-government, the
bulk of the island seems to have been ruled by military
and financial administrators, whose powers were prac-
tically unlimited. But rough as their rule may have
been, it secured peace and good order; and peace and
good order were all that was needed to ensure material

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[1] Capitolinus says of Antoninus Pius :—"With such dili-
gence did he rule the subject peoples that he cared for all men
and all things as his own. All the provinces flourished under
him." Hadrian's solicitude was shown by his ceaseless wan-
derings over the whole Empire, and by the general system of
border fortifications of which his Wall in Britain formed a part.

development. This development soon made itself
felt. Commerce sprang up in the ports of Britain.
Its harvests became so abundant that it was able at
need to supply the necessities of Gaul. Tin mines
were worked in Cornwall, lead mines in Somerset
and Northumberland, and iron mines in the Forest
of Dean. The villas and homesteads which, as the
spade of our archæologists proves, lay scattered over
the whole face of the country, show the general
prosperity of the island.

The extension of its road system, and the upgrowth
of its towns, tell above all how rapidly Britain was
incorporated into the general body of the Empire.
The beacon-fire which blazed on the cliffs of Dover to
guide the vessels from the Gaulish shores to the port
of Richborough proclaimed the union of Britain
with the mainland ; while the route which crossed
the downs of Kent from Richborough to the Thames
linked the roads that radiated from London over the
surface of the island with the general network of
communications along which flowed the social and
political life of the Roman world. When the Emperor
Hadrian traversed these roads at the opening of the
second century, a crowd of towns had already risen
along their course.[1] In the south-east Durovernum,

[1] The bulk of these towns undoubtedly occupied British sites,
and were probably only modifications of communities which had
already taken a municipal shape in the interval of rapid native
development between the landing of Cæsar and the landing of
Claudius. But these, after all, can have been little more than collec-
tions of huts, like the Gaulish communities which had risen under
like circumstances, and the difference between such a community
and the meanest Roman town was even materially immense.

the later Canterbury, connected Richborough with London. In the south-west Venta or Winchester formed the centre of the Gwent, or open downs of our Hampshire ; while gouty provincials found their way to the hot springs of Bath, and Exeter looked out from its rise over the Exe on the wild moorlands of the Cornish peninsula. Colchester and Norwich stand on the sites of Roman cities which gathered to them the new life of the eastern coast ; and Lindum has left its name to the Lincolnshire which was formed in later days around its ruins. Names as familiar meet us if we turn to central Britain. The uplands of the Cotswolds were already crowned with the predecessor of our Cirencester, as those of Hertfordshire were crowned by that of our St. Alban's ; while Leicester represents as early a centre of municipal life in the basin of the Trent. Even on the skirts of the province life and industry sheltered themselves under the Roman arms. A chain of lesser places studded the road from York to the savage regions of the north, where the eagles of a legion protected the settlers who were spreading to the Forth and the Clyde. Caerleon sprang from the quarters of another legion which held down the stubborn freedom that lingered among the mountains of Wales, and guarded the towns which were rising at Gloucester and Wroxeter in the valley of the Severn ; while Chester owes its existence to the station of a third on the Dee, whose work was to bridle the tribes of North Wales and of Cumbria.[1]

[1] It is in the age of the Antonines that we first get a detailed knowledge of Britain in the geographical survey of Ptolemy,

It is easy, however, to exaggerate the civilization of Britain. Even within the province south of the Firths the evidence of inscriptions[1] shows that large tracts of country lay practically outside the Roman life. Though no district was richer or more peopled than the south-west, our Devonshire and our Cornwall seem to have remained almost wholly Celtic. Wales was never really Romanized ; its tribes were held in check by the legionaries at Chester and Caerleon, but as late as the beginning of the third century they called for repression from the Emperor Severus as much as the Picts.[2] The valleys of the Thames and of the Severn were fairly inhabited, but there are fewer proofs of Roman settlement in the valley of the Trent ; and though the southern part of Yorkshire was rich and populous, Northern Britain as a whole was little touched by the new civilization. And even in the south this civilization can have had but little depth or vitality. Large and important as were some of its towns, hardly any inscriptions have been found to tell of the presence of a vigorous municipal life. Unlike its neighbour Gaul, Britain contributed nothing

which gives us the towns of the native tribes (Monum. Hist. Brit. pp. x.-xvi.) ; and in the account of its roads and towns given in the Antonine Itinerary (Ibid. xx.-xxii.). A few milestones survive, and the names of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius which they bear fix the general date of this road-making.

[1] See Hübner, "Inscriptiones Britanniæ Latinæ" (forming the seventh volume of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum," published at Berlin, 1873), a book which must furnish the groundwork of any history of Roman Britain.

[2] There are very few inscriptions of Roman date from Devon and Cornwall ; none from Wales.

to the intellectual riches of the Empire ; and not one of the poets or rhetoricians of the time is of British origin. Even moral movements found little foothold in the island. When Christianity became the religion of the Empire under the house of Constantine, Britain must have become nominally Christian ; and the presence of British bishops at ecclesiastical councils is enough to prove that its Christianity was organized in the ordinary form.[1] But as yet no Christian inscription or ornament has been found in any remains of earlier date than the close of the Roman rule ; and the undoubted existence of churches at places such as Canterbury, or London, or St. Alban's, only gives greater weight to the fact that no trace of such buildings has been found in the sites of other cities which have been laid open by archæological research.

Its life mainly military.

Far indeed as was Britain from the centre of the Empire, had the Roman energy wielded its full force in the island it would have Romanized Britain as completely as it Romanized the bulk of Gaul. But there was little in the province to urge Rome to such an effort. It was not only the most distant of all her western provinces, but it had little natural wealth, and it was vexed by a ceaseless border warfare with the unconquered Britons, the Picts, or Caledonians, beyond the northern Firths. There was little in its material resources to tempt men to that immigration

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[1] Stubbs and Haddan ("Councils of Great Britain," i. 1-40) have collected the few facts which form the meagre evidence for the existence of Christianity in Britain. Even of this meagre list some are doubted by so competent an observer as Mr. Raine ("Historians of the Church of York," Introd. p. xx. note).

from the older provinces of the Empire which was
the main agent in civilizing a new conquest. On the
contrary, the harshness of a climate that knew neither
olive nor vine deterred men of the south from such
a settlement. The care with which every villa is
furnished with its elaborate system of hot-air flues
shows that the climate of Britain was as intolerable
to the Roman provincial as that of India, in spite of
punkahs and verandas, is to the English civilian or the
English planter. The result was that the province re-
mained a mere military department of the Empire. The
importance of its towns was determined by military
considerations. In the earliest age of the occupation,
when the conquerors aimed at a hold on the districts
near to Gaul, Colchester, Verulam, and London were
the greatest of British towns. As the tide of war
rolled away to the north and west, Chester and
Caerleon rivalled their greatness, and York became
the capital of the province. It is a significant fact
that the bulk of the monuments which have been
found in Britain relate to military life. Its inscriptions
and tombs are mostly those of soldiers Its mightiest
work was the great Wall and line of legionary
stations which guarded the province from the Picts.
Its only historic records, are records of border forays
against the barbarians. If we strive to realize its
character from the few facts that we possess, we are
forced to look on Britain as a Roman Algeria.

It was not merely its distance from the seat of rule *Physical*
or the later date of its conquest that hindered the *aspect of*
Britain.
province from passing completely into the general body
of the Empire. Its physical and its social circum-

stances offered yet greater obstacles to any effectual civilization. Marvellous as was the rapid transformation of Britain in the hands of its conquerors, and greatly as its outer aspect came to differ from that of the island in which Claudius landed, it was far from being in this respect the land of later days. In spite of its roads, its towns, and its mining-works, it remained, even at the close of the Roman rule, an "isle of blowing woodland," a wild and half-reclaimed country, the bulk of whose surface was occupied by forest and waste. The rich and lower soil of the river valleys, indeed, which is now the favourite home of agriculture, had in the earliest times been densely covered with primæval scrub; and the only open spaces were those whose nature fitted them less for the growth of trees, the chalk downs and oolitic uplands that stretched in long lines across the face of Britain from the Channel to the Northern Sea. In the earliest traces of our history these districts became the seats of a population and a tillage which have long fled from them as the gradual clearing away of the woodland drew men to the richer soil. Such a transfer of population seems faintly to have begun even before the coming of the Romans; and the roads which they drove through the heart of the country, the waste caused by their mines, the ever-widening circle of cultivation round their towns, must have quickened this social change. But even after four hundred years of their occupation the change was far from having been completely brought about. It is mainly in the natural clearings of the uplands that the population concentrated itself at

the close of the Roman rule, and it is over these districts that the ruins of the villas or country houses of the Roman landowners are most thickly scattered.

Such spaces were found above all at the extremities of the great chalk ranges which give form and character to the scenery of southern Britain. Halfway along our southern coast the huge block of upland which we know as Salisbury plain and the Marlborough downs rises in gentle undulations from the alluvial flat of the New Forest to the lines of escarpment which overlook the vale of Pewsey and the upper basin of the Thames. From the eastern side of this upland three ranges of heights run athwart southern Britain to the north-east and the east, the first passing from the Wiltshire downs by the Chilterns to the uplands of East-Anglia, while the second and third diverge to form the north downs of Surrey or the south downs of Sussex. At the extremities of these lines of heights the upland broadens out into spaces which were seized on from the earliest times for human settlement. The downs of our Hampshire formed a " Gwent " or open clearing, whose name still lingers in its "Gwentceaster" or Winchester; while the upland which became the later home of the North-folk and South-folk formed another and a broader " Gwent " which gave its name to the Gwenta of the Iceni, the predecessor of our Norwich. The North Downs as they neared the sea widened out in their turn into a third upland that still preserves its name of the Caint or Kent, and whose broad front ran from the cliffs of Thanet to those of Dover and Folkestone. Free spaces of the same

character were found on the Cotswolds or on the
Wolds of Lincoln and York ; and in all we find traces
of early culture and of the presence of a population
which has passed away as tillage was drawn to
richer soils.

The transfer of culture and population, indeed, had
begun before the conquest of Claudius ; [1] and the posi-
tion of many Roman towns shows how busily it was
carried on through the centuries of Roman rule.   But
even at the close of this rule the clearings along the
river valleys were still mere strips of culture which
threaded their way through a mighty waste.   To
realize the Britain of the Roman age we must set
before us the Poland or Northern Russia of our own ;
a country into whose tracts of forest-land man is still
hewing his way, and where the clearings round town
or village hardly break the reaches of silent moorlands
or as silent fens.   The wolf roamed over the long
" desert " that stretched from the Cheviots to the
Peak.   Beavers built in the streams of marshy
hollows such as that which reached from Beverley to
Ravenspur.[2]   The wild bull wandered through forest
after forest from Ettrick to Hampstead.[3]   Though the
Roman engineers won fields from Romney marsh on
the Kentish coast, nothing broke the solitude of the
peat-bogs which stretched up the Parrett into the

[1] Raine, " Historians of the Church of York," Introd. pp. ix., x.
[2] Boyd Dawkins, " Cave-Hunting," pp. 76, 132.
[3] Even in the twelfth century the forest district north of
London was full of wild boars and wild oxen, "latebræ ... aprorum
et taurorum sylvestrium."   FitzStephen's Life of Becket ; in
Giles, " St. Thom. Cant." i. 173.

heart of Somersetshire, of the swamp which struck into the heart of the island along the lower Trent, or of the mightier fen along the eastern coast, the Wash which then ran inland up the Witham all but to Lincoln, and up the Nen and the Cam as far as Huntingdon and Cambridge.[1]

But neither moor nor fen covered so vast a space of Britain as its woods.[2] The wedge of forest and scrub that filled the hollow between the North and South Downs stretched in an unbroken mass for a hundred and twenty miles, from Hampshire to the valley of the Medway; but, huge as it was, this "Andredsweald" was hardly greater than other of the woodlands which covered Britain. A line of thickets along the shore of the Southampton Water linked it with as large a forest-tract to the west, a fragment of which survives in our New Forest, but which then bent away through the present Dorsetshire and spread northward round the western edge of the Wiltshire downs to the valley of the Frome. The line of the Severn was blocked above Worcester by the forest of Wyre, which extended northward to Cheshire; while the Avon skirted the border of a mighty woodland, of which Shakspere's Arden became the dwindled representative, and which all but covered the area of the present Warwickshire. Away to the east the rises of Highgate and Hampstead formed the southern

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[1] Pearson, "Historical Maps of England," p. 3.

[2] See Guest, "Early English Settlements in Britain" (Salisbury volume of Proceedings of Archæological Institute), pp. 31, 32. I shall deal more at large with these swamps and woodlands as we meet them in our story.

edge of a forest-tract that stretched without a break
to the Wash, and thus almost touched the belt of
woodland which ran athwart mid-Britain in the
forests of Rockingham and Charnwood, and in the
Brunewald of the Lincoln heights. The northern
part of the province was yet wilder and more in-
accessible than the part to the south; for while
Sherwood and Needwood filled the space between
the Peak and the Trent, the vale of York was
pressed between the moorlands of Pickering and
the waste or " desert " that stretched from the Peak
of Derbyshire to the Roman wall; and beyond the
wall to the Forth the country was little more than
a vast wilderness of moorland and woodland which
later times knew as the forest of Selkirk.

*Divisions
among
Provincials.*
As we follow its invaders step by step across
Britain, we shall see how wide these forests were, and
what hindrances they threw in the way of its assail-
ants. But they must have thrown almost as great
hindrances in the way of its civilization. The cities
of the province indeed were thoroughly Romanized.
Within the walls of towns such as Lincoln or York,
towns governed by their own municipal officers,
guarded by massive walls, and linked together by the
network of roads which reached from one end of the
island to the other, law, language, political and
social life, all were of Rome. But if the towns were
thoroughly Romanized, it seems doubtful, from the
few facts that remain to us, whether Roman civili-
zation had made much impression on the bulk of
the provincials, or whether the serf-like husbandmen
whose cabins clustered round the luxurious villas of the

provincial landowners, or the yet more servile miners

of Northumbria and the Forest of Dean, were touched
by the arts and knowledge of their masters.　The use
of the Roman language may be roughly taken as
marking the progress of the Roman civilization ; and
though Latin had all but wholly superseded the
languages of the conquered peoples in Spain and,
Gaul, its use was probably limited in Britain to the
townsfolk and to the wealthier proprietors without
the towns.　Over large tracts of country the rural
Britons seem to have remained apart from their con-
querors, not only speaking their own language, and
owning some traditional allegiance to their native
chiefs, but retaining their native system of law.
Imperial edicts had long since extended Roman
citizenship to every dweller within the Empire ; but
the wilder provincials may have been suffered to re-
tain in some measure their own usages, as the Zulu
or the Maori is suffered to retain them, though sub-
ject in theory to British law, and entitled to the full
privileges of British subjects.　The Welsh laws which
we possess in a later shape are undoubtedly in the
main the same system of early customs which Rome
found existing among the Britons in the days of
Claudius and Cæsar ; [1] and the fact that they remained
a living law when her legions withdrew proves their
continuance throughout the four hundred years of her
rule, as it proves the practical isolation from Roman
life and Roman civilization of the native communities
which preserved them.

　　The dangers that sprang from such a severance

[1] Sir H. Maine, " Early History of Institutions," p. 6.

INTROD.

Britain
and its
Foes.

Inroads
of the
Picts.

between the two elements of its population must have been stirred into active life by the danger which threatened Britain from the north. No Roman ruler had succeeded in reducing the districts beyond the Firths ; and the Britons who had been sheltered from the Roman sword by the fastnesses of the Highlands were strong enough from the opening of the second century to turn fiercely on their opponents. The wall which the Emperor Hadrian drew across the moors from Newcastle to Carlisle marks the first stage in a struggle with these Caledonians or Picts which lasted to the close of the Roman rule. But even without such a barrier the disciplined soldiers of the Empire could easily have held at bay enemies such as these, and when we find the Picts penetrating in the midst of the fourth century into the heart of Britain, it can hardly have been without the aid of disaffection within the province itself. For such disaffection the same causes must have existed in Britain as we know to have existed in Gaul. The purely despotic system of the Roman government crushed all local vigour by crushing local independence : and here as elsewhere population was no doubt declining as the area of slave-culture widened with the sinking of the labourer into a serf. If the mines were worked by forced labour, they would have been a source of endless oppression ; while town and country alike were drained by heavy taxation, and industry fettered by laws that turned every trade into an hereditary caste. But the disaffection which backed the Pictish invader found a firmer groundwork in Britain than in other imperial districts which suffered from the same

misrule.   Once within the province the Picts would
meet kindred of their own, who though conquered
were hardly more Romanized than themselves, and
whom a jealousy of the Romanized townsfolk might
easily rouse to arms.   That such a division between
its inhabitants broke the strength of Britain at
a later time is nearly certain ; that it had begun
in the middle of the fourth century is probable from
the character of the Pictish inroad which all but
tore Britain from the Empire in the reign of Valen-
tinian.   The inroad was met by his general, Theodo-
sius, and the Picts driven back to their mountains ;
but Theodosius had found southern Britain itself
in possession of the invaders.[1]   Raids so extensive
as this could hardly have been effected without
aid from within ; and the social condition of the
island was such that help from within may have
been largely given.

The Picts however were far from being the only
enemies who were drawn at this moment to the
plunder of the province.   While their clans surged
against the Roman wall, the coasts of Britain were
being harried by marauders from the sea.   The boats
of Irish pirates—or as they were then called, Scots—
ravaged its western shores, while a yet more formid-
able race of freebooters pillaged from Portsmouth to
the Wash.   In their homeland between the Elbe and
the Ems, as well as in a wide tract across the Ems to
the Rhine, a number of German tribes had drawn
together into the people of the Saxons, and it was to

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxvii. cc. 8, 9.   (Monum. Hist.
Brit. p. lxxiii.)

this people that the pirates of the Channel belonged.[1]
Chance has preserved for us in a Sleswick peat-bog
one of the war-keels of these early seamen.　The
boat is flat-bottomed, seventy feet long, and eight or
nine feet wide, its sides of oak-boards fastened with
bark-ropes and iron bolts.　Fifty oars drove it over
the waves with a freight of warriors whose arms,
axes, swords, lances, and knives were found heaped
together in its hold.[2]　Like the galleys of the Middle
Ages, such boats could only creep cautiously along
from harbour to harbour in rough weather ; but in
smooth water their swiftness fitted them admirably
for the piracy by which the men of these tribes were
already making themselves dreaded.　Its flat bottom
enabled them to beach the vessel on any fitting coast ;
and a step on shore at once transformed the boatmen
into a war-band.

*Their
piracy.*

A letter which a Roman provincial, Sidonius Apol-
linaris, wrote in warning to a friend who had em-
barked as an officer in the Channel fleet, which was
" looking out for the pirate-boats of the Saxons,"
gives us a glimpse of these freebooters as they ap-
peared to the civilized world of the fifth century.
" When [3] you see their rowers," says Sidonius, " you
may make up your mind that every one of them
is an arch pirate, with such wonderful unanimity
do all of them at once command, obey, teach, and

[1] Their first recorded appearance off the coast of Gaul is in
A.D. 287.　Eutropius, ix. 21.　(Monum. Hist. Brit. lxxii.)

[2] Lubbock, " Prehistoric Times," pp. 8, 9.

[3] Sidon. Apollin. Epist. viii. 6. (Migne, " Patrologia," vol.
lviii. col. 597.)

learn their business of brigandage. This is why
I have to warn you to be more than ever on
your guard in this warfare. Your foe is of all
foes the fiercest.[1] He attacks unexpectedly ; if you
expect him, he makes his escape ; he despises those
who seek to block his path ; he overthrows those
who are off their guard ; he cuts off any enemy
whom he follows ; while, for himself, he never fails
to escape when he is forced to fly. And more
than this, to these men a shipwreck is a school of
seamanship rather than a matter of dread. They
know the dangers of the deep like men who are
every day in contact with them. For since a storm
throws those whom they wish to attack off their
guard, while it hinders their own coming onset
from being seen from afar, they gladly risk them-
selves in the midst of wrecks and sea-beaten rocks
in the hope of making profit out of the very
tempest." [2]

The picture is one of men who were not merely
greedy freebooters but finished seamen, and who had
learned, " barbarians " as they were, how to command
and how to obey in their school of war. But it was
not the daring or the pillage of the Saxons that
spread terror along the Channel so much as their
cruelty. It was by this that the Roman provincials

*Their
slave-
hunting.*

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[1] "Hostis est omni hoste truculentior."

[2] Cf. Sidon. Apollin. Carm. vii. (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. c.)

> " Quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus
> Sperabat, cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
> *Ludus*, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo."

distinguished them [1] from the rest of the German races who were attacking the Empire; for while men noted in the Frank his want of faith, in the Alan his greed, in the Hun his shamelessness, in the Gepid an utter absence of any trace of civilization, what they noted in the Saxon was his savage cruelty. It was this ruthlessness that made their descents on the coast of the Channel so terrible to the provincials. The main aim of these pirate-raids, as of the pirate-raids from the north, hundreds of years later, was man-hunting, the carrying off of men, women, and children, into slavery. But the slave-hunting of the Saxons had features of peculiar horror. "Before they raise anchor and set sail from the hostile continent for their own homeland, their wont when they are on the eve of returning is to slay by long and painful tortures one man in every ten of those they have taken, in compliance with a religious use which is even more lamentable than superstitious; and for this purpose to gather the whole crowd of doomed men together, and temper the injustice of their fate by the mock justice of casting lots for the victims. Though such a rite is not so much a sacrifice that cleanses as a sacrilege that defiles them, the doers of this deed of blood deem it a part of their religion rather to torture their captives than to take ransom for them." [2]

[1] Salvian, de Gubernatione Dei, iv. 14. "Gens Saxonum fera est, Francorum infidelis, Gepidarum inhumana, Chunorum im pudica," etc.

[2] "Mos est remeaturis decimum quemque captorum (*caprorum Migne*) per æquales et cruciarias pœnas, plus ob hoc tristi quam superstitioso ritu, necare; superque collectam turbam periturorum,

From the close of the third century the raids of these Saxons had been felt along the coasts of Gaul, and a fleet which appears from this time in the Channel must have been manned to resist them. It is not however till the year 364[1] that we hear of them as joining in any attack upon Britain itself; but from this moment their ravages seem to have been ceaselessly carried on, and their presence off its shores became one among the pressing difficulties which the country had to meet. For the road between Britain and Rome lay across the Channel : and the occupation of the waters or coasts of the Channel by a pirate fleet was not only fatal to the trade of the province with the European mainland, but threatened its connection with the central government, and cut it off from the body of the Empire. It is to the years therefore that followed this joint attack of Saxon and Pict that we must look for the date of two measures

mortis iniquitatem sortis æquitate dispergere. Talibus eligunt votis, victimis solvunt ; et per hujusmodi non tam sacrificia purgati quam sacrilegia polluti, religiosum putant cædis infaustæ perpetratores de capite captivo magis exigere tormenta quam pretia."

I have ventured to base my version of this letter on a spirited though free translation given by Mr. Hodgkin in "Italy and her Invaders," vol. ii. 365. The "cruciarias pœnas," which Mr. Hodgkin renders "crucifixion," are more probably something like the "spread-eagle" of the later Northmen.

[1] "Cum (Carausius) per tractum Belgicæ et Armoricæ pacandum mare accepisset quod Franci et Saxones infestabant." Eutrop. (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. lxxii.) ; Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxvi. c. 4. "Hoc tempore . . . Picti Saxonesque et Scoti et Attacotti Britannos ærumnis vexavere continuis." (Monum. Hist. Brit. p. lxxiii.)

INTROD.

Britain
and its
Foes.

which mark what we may term a change of front in the military administration of Britain. It was probably now that her greater towns strengthened themselves with walls, a change which implied dread of an attack from which the Roman troops might be unable to defend them ; while the pressure of the Saxons, as well as the district on which it told, is marked by the organization of the coast from the Wash to Southampton Water under an officer who bore the title of " Count of the Maritime Tract," or " of the Saxon Shore." [1]

The
Saxon
Shore.

It was here that Britain lay most open to the pirates' forays Unguarded by the cliffs and bleak moorlands that ran northward along the coast from the Humber to the Tweed, or by forests such as lined the shore from Portsmouth to the west, the tract which was known as the Saxon Shore presented along its whole line natural features that

[1] In the full description of his office and troops (" Notitia utriusque Imperii," Mon. Hist. Brit. xxiv.) the style of this officer is " Comes Limitis Saxonici per Britanniam." Elsewhere (Ibid. xxiii.) he is informally " Comes Littoris Saxonici per Britannias." The arguments of Lappenberg (Anglo-Saxon Kings, ed. 1881, i. 57, 58), Kemble (Saxons in England, i. pp. 10, 11, 14), and others for an earlier date for this shore, as well as for the derivation of the name from a Saxon settlement along it rather than its use as a barrier against Saxon descents, though still maintained by Mr. Skene (Celtic Scotland, vol. i. p. 151), have been satisfactorily refuted by Dr. Guest (E. E. Set. p. 33 *et seq.*), whose judgment is adopted by Mr. Freeman (Norm. Conq. i. 11, note), and by Professor Stubbs (Constit. Hist. i. 67, note). The " Notitia Imperii," in which alone the term is found, was drawn up about A.D. 400 ; possibly in 403. (Hodgson Hinde, Hist. of Northumberland, i. part 1, pp. 18, 19.)

invited and favoured attack. Its sea-brim was fringed
with marshy islands or low tracts of alluvial soil
which offered secure points of landing or anchor-
age, and broken by large estuaries whose waters gave
access to the country behind them ; while from
these lower parts the land rose within into downs
and uplands which were at once easy to overrun
and favourable for settlement. But the measures
of defence which were now taken more than com-
pensated for the natural weakness of the island in
this quarter. The coast was lined with strong
fortresses.[1] At Brancaster in Norfolk the northern-
most of these watched the inlet of the Wash
and guarded the East-Anglian downs. In our
Suffolk a stronghold now known as Burgh Castle
blocked the estuary of the Yare, as the walls of
Colchester barred the inlet of the Stour. Othona,
a fortress at the mouth of the Blackwater, pro-
tected the southern flats of our Essex ; while London
forbade all passage up the Thames. Kent was the
most vital point of all, for through it passed the line
of communication between Britain and Rome ; and
a group of fortresses, admirably disposed, protected
this passage. One guarded Richborough, which was
the common port for all traffic from Gaul ; a second
at Reculver held the entrance of the sea-channel

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[1] The list is given in the "Notitia Imperii" (Mon. Hist.
Brit. xxiv.), with the disposition of the troops in each fortress.
London, and the towns at Canterbury and Rochester, though
backing this line of defence, were not subject to the Count of
the Saxon Shore.

which then parted Thanet from the mainland, and
through which vessels passed to London by the
estuary of the Thames ; while walled towns on the site
of our Canterbury and of our Rochester protected
the points at which the road from Richborough to
London passed the Stour and the Medway. [1]   Three
other fortresses held the coast of the Channel as far
as the great woods which hindered all landing to the
west.   Lymne guarded the lowlands of Kent and the
reclaimed tracts of Romney Marsh ; Anderida, the
modern Pevensey, held our Sussex ; while Porchester
marks the site of a castle which looked over the
Southampton Water, and blocked the road to the
Downs.

*Withdrawal
of Romans
from
Britain.*
Garrisoned as they were by a force of at least ten
thousand men, the legion placed at the command of
the Count of the Saxon Shore, these fortresses were
too strong a barrier for the pirates to break ; and we
may set aside the theories which, in ignorance of the
military strength of the Empire and of its hold over the
provinces, suppose them to have conquered and settled
here for centuries before the close of the Roman rule.
Up to the moment indeed when the Imperial troops
quitted Britain, we see them able easily to repel the
attacks of its barbarous assailants.   When a renewal
of their inroads left Britain weak and exhausted at
the accession of the Emperor Honorius, the Roman
general Stilicho renewed the triumphs which Theo-

[1] The " Notitia " stations troops at Dover : but it is doubtful
whether there was any Roman fortress there.   Clark, " Dover
Castle," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxxii. p. 440.

dosius had won.[1] The Pict was driven back afresh,
the Saxon boats chased by his galleys as far as the
Orkneys, and the Saxon Shore probably strengthened
with fresh fortresses. But the campaign of Stilicho was
the last triumph of the Empire in its western waters.
The struggle Rome had waged so long drew in fact
to its end; at the opening of the fifth century her
resistance suddenly broke down; and the savage
mass of barbarism with which she had battled broke
in upon the Empire at a time when its force was
sapped by internal decay.   In its western dominions,
where the German peoples were its foes, the triumph
of its enemies was complete. The Franks conquered
and colonized Gaul. The West-Goths conquered and
colonized Spain. The Vandals founded a kingdom
in Africa. The Burgundians encamped in the border-
land between Italy and the Rhone. The East-Goths
ruled at last in Italy itself. And now that the
fated hour was come, the Saxons too closed upon
their prey. The condition of the province invited
their attack, for the strength of the Empire, broken
everywhere by military revolts, was nowhere more
broken than in Britain, where the two legions which
remained quartered at Richborough and York set
up more than once their chiefs as Emperors, and
followed them across the Channel in a march upon
Rome. The last of these pretenders, Constantine,

[1] Claudian, De tert. Consul. Honorii, ap. Mon. Hist. Brit.
p. xcviii.

> "Maduerunt Saxone fuso
> Orcades; incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule;
> Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne."

crossed over to Gaul in 407 with the bulk of the
soldiers quartered in Britain, and the province seems
to have been left to its own defence ; for it was no
longer the legionaries, but " the people of Britain,"
who, " taking up arms," repulsed a new onset of the
Barbarians.   As the Empire was organized, such a
rising in arms was a defiance of its laws and a prac-
tical overthrow of the whole system of government ;
and it was naturally followed by the expulsion of
Constantine's officials and the creation of a civil admin-
istration on the part of the provincials.   Independent
however as they found themselves, they had no wish
to break away from Rome.   Their rising had been
against a usurper : and they appealed to Honorius to
accept their obedience and replace the troops.   But
the legions of the Empire were needed to guard Rome
itself : and in 410 a letter of the Emperor bade Britain
provide for its own government and its own defence.[1]

*The
British
Defence.*
Few statements are more false than those which
picture the British provincials as cowards, or their
struggle against the barbarian as a weak and un-
worthy one.   Nowhere, in fact, through the whole
circuit of the Roman world, was so long and so
desperate a resistance offered to the assailants of
the Empire.   Unaided as she was left, Britain held
bravely out as soon as her first panic was over ;
and for some thirty years after the withdrawal of
the legions the free province maintained an equal
struggle against her foes.[2]   Of these she probably

[1] Zozimus, lib. vi. c. 10, ap. Mon. Hist. Brit. p. lxxix.
[2] Later tradition attributed the Wall and the castles of the
Saxon Shore to this time.   Gildas (ed. Stevenson), Hist. sec. 18.

counted the Saxons as still the least formidable.
The freebooters from Ireland were not only scourging
her western coast, but planting colonies at points
along its line. To the north of the Firth of Clyde
these " Scots " settled about this time in the penin-
sula of Argyle. To the south of it they may have
been the Gael who mastered and gave their name to
Galloway ; and there are some indications that a larger
though a less permanent settlement was being made
in the present North Wales. The Pict was an even
more pressing danger. If he made no settlements,
his raids grew fiercer and fiercer ; and though once
at least a general rising of despair drove him
back from the very heart of the country,[1] as the
fifth century wore on Britain was torn with a civil
strife which made united resistance impossible. Its
fortunes indeed at this time have reached us only
in late and questionable traditions ;[2] but there is

[1] Gildas (Hist. c. xx.) makes a fruitless appeal to the
Empire precede this rally. As the letter is to "Agitio ter
consuli," and Ætius was consul for the third time in 446, it
cannot have been earlier than this date. (Guest, E. E. Set.
43.) For the political struggles, see Guest, ibid. 49, 50.

[2] Our only British informants for this period, as for the con-
quest that followed it, are Gildas ("Historia" and "Epistola,"
—really a single work ; cf. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," i.
p. 44) and Nennius ("Hist. Britonum "). Both are edited by
Stevenson, and the first may be found in Mon. Hist. Brit.
The genuineness of Gildas, which has been doubted, may now be
looked on as established (see Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils
of Britain," i. p. 44). Skene ("Celtic Scotland," i. 116, note,
gives a critical account of the various biographies of Gildas.
He seems to have been born in 516, probably in the North-
Welsh valley of the Clwyd ; to have left Britain for Armorica
when thirty years old, or in 546 ; to have written his history

much to confirm the main outline of the story which these traditions preserve. City and country, Roman part and native part, may well have risen in arms against one another; and under a leader of native blood the latter seem to have been successful over their Romanized opponents. But even this failed to unite the province when the Pict poured afresh over the Roman Wall and the boats of the Irish and English marauders appeared again off its coasts. The one course which seemed left was to imitate the fatal policy by which Rome had invited its doom while striving to avert it, the policy of matching barbarian against barbarian.[1] It was with this view that Britain turned to what seemed the weakest of her assailants, and strove to find among the freebooters who were harrying her eastern coast troops whom she could use as mercenaries against the Pict.

there about 556 or 560; to have crossed to Ireland between 566-569; and to have died there in 570. For the nature and date of the compilation which bears the name of Nennius, see Guest, "Early English Settlements," p. 36, and Stevenson's introduction to his edition of him. In its earliest form it is probably of the seventh century. Little, however, is to be gleaned from the confused rhetoric of Gildas; and it is only here and there that we can use the earlier facts which seem to be embedded among the later legends of Nennius.

[1] Gildas, Hist. c. 22, 23.

BRITAIN
and the
ENGLISH CONQUEST

Scale of Statute Miles
0   10   20   30   40   50   60

British names ...
Roman names ...
English names ...
Modern names ...   Defyr
                                   VECTIS
                                   WINTE
                                   Bedford
Forests shewn thus
Marshes
Heath
Mountainous country is indicated
by a ruled tint thus

London · Macmillan & Co

Stanford's Geog. Estab.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEST OF THE SAXON SHORE.

449—*c.* 500.

In the year 449 or 450 [1] a band of warriors was drawn to the shores of Britain by the usual pledges

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[1] With Mr. Freeman and Mr. Stubbs I accept the argument of Dr. Guest ("Ear. Engl. Settlm. in S. Britain," p. 43, etc.) as conclusive in favour of the date 449 or 450 for this first settlement of the invaders. The date really rests on the authority of Gildas and of Bæda. The first places the coming of the strangers after the letter in which the Britons sought help from Ætius in his third consulship, *i.e.* in 446. Bæda, who generally follows Gildas in his story, fixes it in the reign of Marcian, which he believed to begin in 449, and which in his "English Chronicle" he had begun in 452, but which really began in 450 and ended in 457. Bæda's words (H. E. lib. i. c. 15) simply place the landing in Marcian's reign; but they were generally read as assigning it to the first year of his reign, and hence the English Chronicle, followed by later writers, assigned it to 449. The work of Nennius gives three other dates. One passage, added in the ninth century, and therefore of little weight, assigns it to 392. Another places it in 428. But the only important statement is one which Mr. Skene attributes to the work "as originally compiled in the seventh century," and which runs, " Regnante Gratiano secundo Equantio Romæ Saxones a Guorthigerno suscepti sunt anno (*quadringentesimo*, Stev.) trecentesimo

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of land and pay.   The warriors were Jutes, men of a tribe which has left its name to Jutland, at the extremity of the peninsula that projects from the shores of North-Germany, but who were probably akin to the race that was fringing the opposite coast of Scandinavia and settling in the Danish Isles. In three "keels"—so ran the legend of their conquest—and with their Ealdormen, Hengest and Horsa, at their head, these Jutes landed at Ebbsfleet[1] in the Isle of Thanet.

With the landing of Hengest and his war-band English history begins.[2]   We have no longer to watch

quadragesimo septimo post passionem Christi." (Nennius, ed. Stevenson, c. 31.)   This would be 374, when Gratian was consul with Equitius ; and probably arose from a confusion of the great inroad of the Saxons which occupied Theodosius in the first and second years of Gratian's rule, with their permanent landing in Britain.   The arguments for these earlier dates have been recently restated in Skene, " Celtic Scotland," i. 146 *et seq*.

[1] " Eopwine's fleot," English Chronicle, a. 449.   The older name for Thanet, Ruim, is preserved in the local name, Ramsgate.

[2] The story of the English conquest as a whole rests on the authority of the " English Chronicle," as to the general composition and value of which I shall speak more largely later on.   The annals from 449 to the end of the English conquest—with which we are here concerned—were probably embodied in the Chronicle in the middle of the ninth century.   " They represent," says Mr. Earle, " the gleanings and reconstruction of the half-lost early history of Wessex at the time of the first compilation in 855.   Embodying antiquities of a high type, this section is not the oldest composition preserved in this Chronicle.   It is such history as could still be made out of oral traditions, and it probably represents the collected information of the bardic memory, aided by the runic stones and the roll of kings." (Earle, " Two Parallel Chronicles," Introduction, p. ix.)   Into some of these early entries a mythical element certainly enters (as in the names

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the upgrowth of Roman life in a soil from which
Roman life has been swept away, or to question the
dim records of a vanished past in the vain hope of
recalling the life that our fathers lived in their
homeland by the Baltic.   From the hour when they
set foot on the sands of Thanet we follow the story
of Englishmen in the land they made their own.
There is little to catch the eye in Ebbsfleet itself, a
mere lift of ground with a few grey cottages dotted
over it, cut off nowadays from the sea by a re-
claimed meadow and a sea-wall.   Taken as a whole,
indeed, the scene has a wild beauty of its own.   To
the right the white curve of Ramsgate cliffs looks
down on the crescent of Pegwell Bay, while far away
to the left across grey marsh-levels, where tiny smoke-
wreaths mark the sites of Richborough and Sandwich,
the coastline bends dimly to the fresh rise of cliffs
beyond Deal.   But a higher sense than that of beauty
draws us to the. landing-place of our fathers.   No
spot in Britain can be so sacred to Englishmen as that
which first felt the tread of English feet.   Every-
thing in the character of the ground confirms the

of Port and Wightgar, eponyms of Portsmouth and Wightgara-
burh or Carisbrook), and we may perhaps detect traces of "an
artificial chronology in which eight and four are prevalent
factors" (Earle, Par. Chron. Intr. p. ix. ; see, however, on this
matter, Guest, E. E. Set., Salisbury vol. of Archæol. Institute,
p. 38 *et seq.*) ; but there is no real ground for the general scepti-
cism as to the whole run of dates and facts expressed by writers
such as Lappenberg (Angl. Sax. (1881) i. 97 *et seq.*). See Stubbs
(Constit. Hist. i. 46) and Guest (E. E. Set. pp. 38–42, etc.), whose
conclusions are accepted by Mr. Freeman (Norm. Conq. i. 9, note)
The later English accounts of this period, such as those of Asser,
Ethelward, or Florence, are all based on the Chronicle.

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tradition which fixes this spot at Ebbsfleet ; for, great as the physical changes of the country have been since the fifth century, they have told little on its main features. At the time of Hengest's landing a broad inlet of sea parted Thanet from the mainland of Britain, for the marshes which stretch from Reculver to Sandwich were then, as they remained for centuries,[1] a wide sea-channel, hardly less than a mile across, through which vessels from Gaul commonly made their way into the estuary of the Thames. The mouth of this inlet was narrowed by two sandspits, now lost in the general level of the soil, but which at that time jutted out from either shore into the waves. On the southern spit stands the present town of Sandwich, while the northern is still known by the name of Ebbsfleet. If the war-ships of the pirates therefore were cruising off the coast at the moment when the bargain which gave them Thanet was struck, their disembarkation at. Ebbsfleet, where they first touched its soil, was natural enough. The choice of the spot suggests too that their landing was a peaceful one. Richborough, a fortress whose broken ramparts rise hard by above the grey flats of Minster marsh, and which was then the common landing-place of travellers from Gaul, was too important a spot to have been left without a

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[1] In Bæda's day this channel was about three furlongs wide (Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 25). The tolls of the ferry over it at Sarre were still valuable in Edward the Third's days ; and it was not till the time of Henry the Seventh that the gradual silting up of the inlet forced Kent to replace the ferry by a bridge and road at this point (Archæol. Cantiana, vol. v. p. 306).

British garrison. Even if it had ceased to be the
station of the fleet that guarded the Channel, it
still commanded the road which ran through Kent
to London; and some force must have replaced
the legionary troops that held it when it was the
head-quarters of the Count of the Saxon Shore.
That no record remains of any encounter with these
troops at Richborough may well have been because
the Jutes who landed under Hengest landed not as
enemies but as allies.

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The after-course of events indeed seems to show
that the choice of this landing-place was the result of
a settled design.[1] Between the Briton and his hire-
ling soldiers there could be little trust. Quarters in
Thanet would satisfy the followers of Hengest,[2] who
thus lay encamped within sight of their fellow-pirates
in the Channel, and who felt themselves secured
against the treachery which had often proved fatal
to the Germans whom Rome called to her aid by the
broad inlet that parted their camp from the main-
land. But the choice was no less satisfactory to the
provincial himself, trembling—and as the event
proved, justly trembling—lest in his zeal against the
Pict he had brought an even fiercer foe into Britain.
For his dangerous allies were cooped in a corner of
the land, and parted from the bulk of Britain by a
sea-channel which was guarded by the strongest for-
tresses of the coast. The need of such precautions
was seen in the disputes which arose as soon as the

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[1] We are thrown here wholly on Gildas, sec. 23.

[2] Solinus speaks of Thanet as fruitful in cornfields. Mon.
Hist. Brit. p. x.

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work for which the mercenaries had been hired was
done. In the first years that followed after their
landing, Jute and Briton fought side by side ; and
the Picts are said to have at last been scattered to
the winds in a great battle on the eastern coast of
Britain. · But danger from the Pict was hardly over
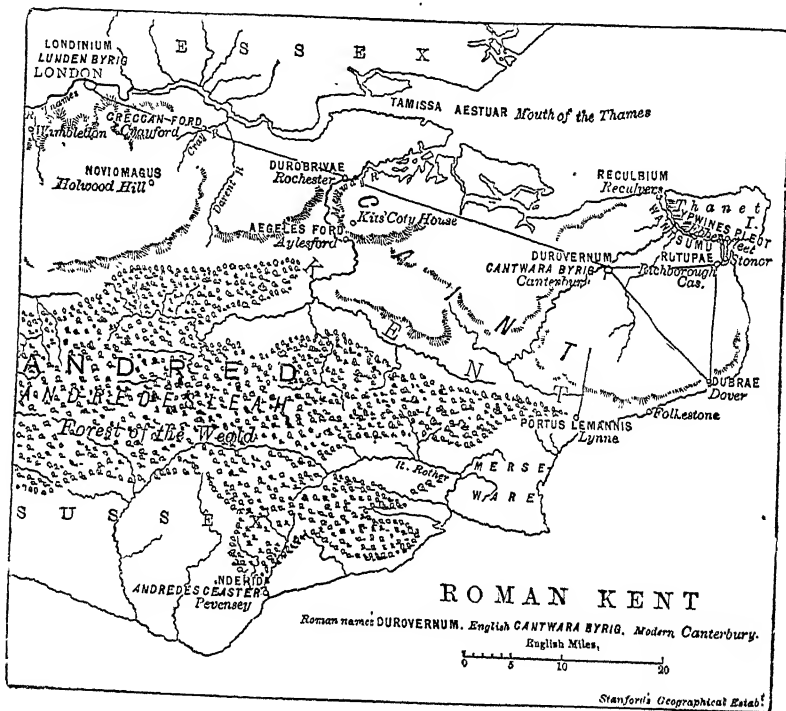
when danger came from the Jutes themselves. Their
numbers probably grew fast as the news of their
settlement in Thanet spread among their fellow-
pirates who were haunting the Channel ; and with
the increase of their number must have grown the
difficulty of supplying them with rations and pay.

The dispute which rose over these questions was
at last closed by Hengest's men with a threat of war.
But the threat, as we have seen, was no easy one to
carry out.[1] Right across their path in any attack
upon Britain stretched the inlet of sea that parted
Thanet from the mainland, a strait which was
then traversable only at low water[2] by a long and
dangerous ford and guarded at either mouth by
fortresses. The channel of the Medway, with the
forest of the Weald bending round from it to the
south, furnished a second line of defence for our West
Kent and Sussex ; while the strongholds of Dover

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Hengest's
inroad.

[1] In tracing the English conquest of Kent, as in the conquest
of Sussex and Wessex, I have been mainly guided by the
researches of Dr. Guest (" Early English Settlements in South
Britain," in the Salisbury volume of Proceedings of the Archæo-
logical Institute for 1849). I cannot, with Mr. Freeman, pro-
fess myself " an unreserved follower of that illustrious scholar ; "
for the advance of linguistic science has set aside many of the
conclusions he has drawn from Welsh philology, while, in his
researches into the history of the princes of North Wales
and Damnonia, he has placed far too great a reliance on the
documents, many spurious and all tampered with, contained in the
Book of Llandaff. (For the real character of these documents,
see Mr. Haddan's note in Haddan and Stubbs, " Councils," vol. i.
p. 147.) But when these deductions are made, they do little
to lessen the debt which our early history owes to Dr. Guest.
By his combination of archæological research and knowledge of
the ground, with an exact study of the meagre documentary
evidence, he has not only restored, so far as they can be restored,
many pages of a lost chapter of our history, that of the Conquest
of Britain, but he has furnished a method for after inquirers, of
which I have striven, however imperfectly, to avail myself in the
pages that follow.
[2] Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 53, note. By Bæda's day this inlet
was known to Englishmen as the Wantsum.

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and Lymne guarded their portion of the Saxon
shore. Great however as these difficulties were,
they failed to check the onset of the Jutes. From
the spot at which the conflict between Hengest and
the Britons took place in 455,[1] we may gather that
his attack was a sudden one, and that the success of
the invaders was due mainly to a surprise. The inlet
may have been crossed before any force could be
collected to oppose the English onset, or the boats of
the Jutes may have pushed from the centre of it up
the channel of its tributary, the Stour, itself at that
time a wide and navigable estuary, to the town that
stood on the site of our Canterbury, the town of
Durovernum. Durovernum had grown up among the
marshes of the Stour, a little cluster of houses raised
above the morass on a foundation of piles. But small
as the town was, it stood at a point where the roads
from Richborough, Dover, and Reculver united to
pass by a ford traversable at low water on their way
to London ; and the military importance of its posi-
tion was marked by the rough oval of massive walls
which lay about it. The strength of the place was
doubled by the broad river channel that guarded it
on the north-west and the marshy ground which
stretched along its north-eastern side. In this quarter
a Christian church had risen on a site destined to
be occupied in after days by the Mother-Church of
all England ; while another church, that was to
be hardly less memorable in our religious annals,
lay without the walls of the town on the road to

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[1] E. Chron. a. 455.

Richborough.[1] But neither wall nor marshes saved
Durovernum from Hengest's onset, and the town
was left in blackened and solitary ruin as the in-
vaders pushed along the road to London.

No obstacle seems to have checked their march
from the Stour to the Medway. Passing over the
heights which were crowned with the forest of
Blean, they saw the road strike like an arrow past
the line of Frodsham Creek through a rich and
fertile district, where country houses and farms
clustered thickly on either side of it, and where
the burnt grain which is still found among their
ruins may tell of the smoke-track that marked the
Jutish advance.[2] As they passed the Swale however,
and looked to their right over the potteries whose
refuse still strews the mud-banks of Upchurch, their
march seems to have swerved abruptly to the
south. Whether they were drawn aside by greed
of plunder, for the Medway valley was then, as
now, one of the most fruitful and populous dis-
tricts of the Caint, or whether they were forced by
the guarded walls of the town which is now our
Rochester [3] to turn southwards for a ford across the
river, the march of the Jutes bent at this point
along a ridge of low hills which forms the bound of
the river-valley on the east. The country through
which it led them was full of memories of a past
which had even then faded from the minds of men ;

[1] Fausett's "Canterbury till Domesday," Archæol. Journal,
xxxii. 378 ; and "Roman Cemeteries in Canterbury " Archæol.
Cantiana, iv. 27.

[2] Murray's " Kent," p. 70, of remains at Hartlip.

[3] See G. T. Clark, "Rochester Castle," Archæol. Jour. xxxii. 207.

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for the hill-slopes which they traversed were the grave-ground of a vanished race, and scattered among the boulders that strewed the soil rose cromlechs and huge barrows of the dead. One mighty relic survives in the monument now called Kit's Coty House, a cromlech which had been linked in old days by an avenue of huge stones to a burial-ground some few miles off near the village of Addington. It was from a steep knoll on which the grey, weather-beaten stones of this monument are reared, that the view of their first battle-ground would break on Hengest's warriors; and a lane which still leads down from it through peaceful homesteads would guide them across the river-valley to a ford which has left its name in the village of Aylesford that overhangs it. At this point, which is still the lowest ford across the Medway, and where an ancient trackway crossed the river,[1] the British leaders must have taken post for the defence of West Kent; but the Chronicle of the conquering people [2] tells nothing of the rush that may have carried the ford or of the fight that went struggling up through the village. We hear only that Horsa fell in the moment of victory; and the flint heap of Horsted, which has long preserved his name, and was held in after-time to mark his grave, is thus the earliest of those monuments of English valour of which Westminster is the last and noblest shrine.[3]

[1] Guest, E. E. Sett. 47. For antiquities of Roman date found in this ford, see Archæol. Cantiana, i. 174.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 455.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 15, and Guest, E. E. Sett. 48.

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Repulse
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The victory of Aylesford was followed by a political change among the assailants, whose loose organization around earldormen was exchanged for a stricter union. Aylesford, we are told,[1] was no sooner won than "Hengest took to the kingdom, and Ælle, his son." The change no doubt gave fresh vigour to their attack; and the two kings pushed forward in 457 from the Medway to the conquest of West Kent. Fording the Darent at Dartford, they again met the British forces at the passage of the Cray, a little stream that falls through a quiet valley from the chalk downs hard by at Orpington. Their victory must have been complete, for at its close, as the Chronicle of their conquerors tells us, the Britons "forsook Kent-land and fled with much fear to London."[2] But the ground Hengest had won seems soon to have been won back again. If we trust British tradition, the battle at Crayford was followed by a political revolution in Britain itself. The overthrow of the native leader, Vortigern, may have proved fatal to his cause; it would seem at any rate that the Romanized Britons rose in revolt under Aurelius Ambrosianus, a descendant of the last Roman general who claimed the purple as an emperor in Britain; and that the success of Aurelius drove his rival to the mountains of the west.[3] The

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[1] E. Chron. a. 455.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 457. It is possible that the "pagus" or territory of Londinium south of the Thames extended to the Cray, as this was the bound of its citizens' right of chase in the Middle Ages.

[3] Gildas. Hist. sec. 25; Guest, E. E. Sett. 50.

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revolution revived for a while the energy of the province. Fresh from his triumph over Vortigern, Aurelius marched on the invaders who were turning Kent into a desert, and his advance forced the Jutes to surrender their conquests and to fall back on their stronghold of Thanet. The fortresses of Richborough and Reculver at either mouth of the inlet which parted Thanet from the mainland still remained in British hands, and basing themselves on the former, the troops of Aurelius seem to have succeeded for some years in prisoning Hengest in his island-lair.[1]

Richborough. Richborough had long served as the head-quarters of the legion whose business it was to guard the Saxon Shore; and its site was one of great military strength.[2] The mouth of the Wantsum was narrowed, as we have seen, by the two jutting sandspits of Ebbsfleet and Sandwich; but within these the estuary widened again into a northern and a southern bay, the one beneath the slopes of Minster, the other between Sandwich and the little hamlet of Fleet. The last bay formed a shallow lagoon, whose oyster-beds were famous in the markets of Rome, and a small rise or islet in the midst of it was crowned by the massive walls of Richborough. The marble buildings within these walls had served no doubt for the residence of the Count of the Saxon Shore. Hard by them stood an amphitheatre for the games of the legionaries, and the hill-slope was covered by a town which the fortress protected. Small

[1] Nennius, sec. 43, 44, 45; Guest, E. E. Sett. 53.

[2] See map of the district at this time in Archæol. Cantiana, viii. 14.

as was the area of the citadel, its walls were
twelve feet thick and nearly thirty feet high, and
both faces and angles were strengthened by bastions
of solid masonry.[1]   Against walls such as these, or
those of its sister fortress at Reculver, the unskilled
efforts of the Jutes could do little, and though no
attempt seems to have been made to dislodge them
from Thanet, the British forces remained strong
enough to prison them for some years within the
limits of the island.

In 465 however the petty conflicts which had gone
on along the shores of the Wantsum made way for a
decisive struggle.   Hengest may have been strength-
ened by reinforcements from his home-land ; while the
losses of Aurelius show that he had mustered the
whole strength of the island to meet the expected
onset.   But the overthrow of the Britons at Wipped's-
fleet[2] was so terrible that all hope of preserving the
bulk of Kent seems from this moment to have been
abandoned : and no further struggle disturbed the
Jutes in its conquest and settlement.   It was only
along its southern shore that the Britons now held
their ground, and we can hardly doubt it was the
reduction of the fortresses in this quarter which
occupied the later years of Hengest.[3]   Richborough
and Reculver must have yielded at last to his
arms ; the beacon-fire which had so long guided

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*Final
conquest
of the
Caint.*

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[1] See Roach Smith's " Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver,
and Lymne," for excavations on these sites.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 465.   " There twelve Wealish Ealdormen
they slew."

[3] Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 54.

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the Roman galleys along the Channel ceased to blaze on the cliffs of Dover; and a final victory of the Jutes in 473 may mark the moment when they reached the rich pastures which the Roman engineers had reclaimed from Romney Marsh. A fortress at Lymne, whose broken walls look from the slope to which they cling over the great flat at their feet, was the key to this district; and with its fall the work of the first conqueror was done. In this quarter at least the resistance of the provincials was utterly broken; in the last conflict the Chronicle of the invaders boasts that the Britons "fled from the English as from fire." [1]

Landing of the South Saxons.

With this advance to the mouth of the Weald the work of Hengest's men came to an end; nor did the Jutes from this time play any important part in the attack on the island, for their after-gains were limited to the Isle of Wight and a few districts on the Southampton Water. Fully indeed as the Caint was won, no district was less fitted to serve as a starting-point in any attack on Britain at large. While the Andredsweald, which lay in an impenetrable mass along its western border, extended southward behind the swamps of Romney Marsh to the coast of the Channel, a morass that stretched from the hills of Dulwich to the banks of the Thames blocked the narrow strip of open country between the northern edge of the Weald and the river. The more tempting waterway along the Thames itself was barred by the walls, if not by the fortified bridge, of London. The strength of these barriers

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 473.

is proved by the long pause which took place in the advance of the Jutes, for a century was to pass before they made any effort to penetrate further into the island. But their success had called a mightier foe to the work of invasion in the freebooters whose daring and whose ruthlessness were

SOUTH BRITAIN

Roman names -VECTIS, English -SAÉRO BYRIC, Modern -Chichester

English Miles

0   5   10   20   30

Stanford's Geographical Estab.t
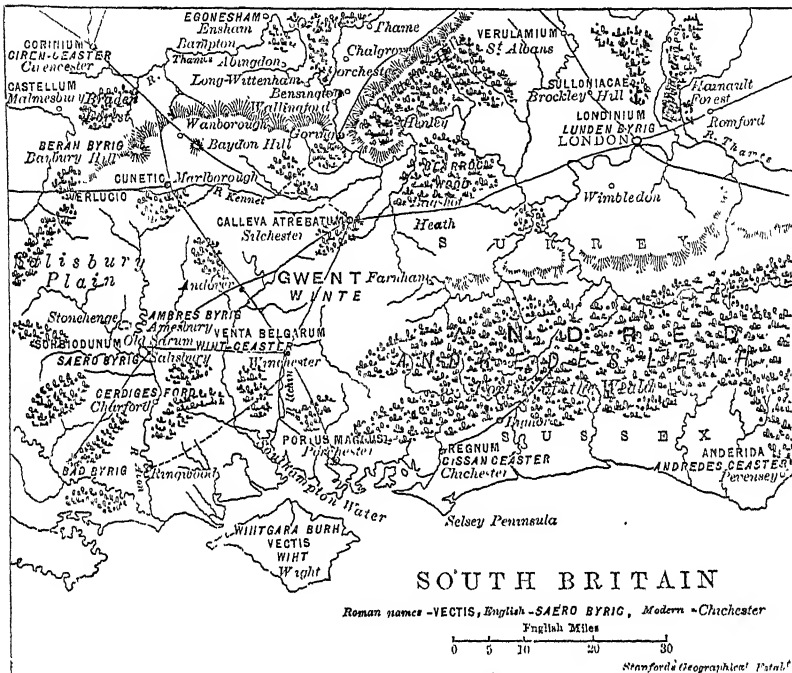
being painted at this moment by the pen of Sidonius. It was pirates of the Saxon race, with Frisians perhaps who sailed under their name,[1] whose long pillage of the coast from the Wash to the Solent

[1] Procopius, De Bell. Goth. lib. iv. 20, mentions "Frisians" among the three peoples of Britain.

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had been preserved in its name of the Saxon Shore. It was certain that the conquests of Hengest would call these rivals to their prey, and the settlement of the Jutes was soon followed by Saxon descents on either side of the Caint.[1] We know best their descent to the westward of it. Beyond Romney Marsh along the Channel the creeks and inlets which break the clay-flats to the westward of the Arun offered easy entrance for the boats of the pirates; and here tradition placed the landing in 477 of Saxon war-bands who followed Ælle and his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa. The first gave his name to the landing-place of the pirates in the Selsea peninsula, Cymen's ora or Keynor; while the name of the last is said to be preserved in that of Chichester, a borough that grew up at a later time on the ruins of the little town of Regnum, which must have been the earliest object of this attack. Their raid was a successful one; and after severe losses the Britons of this district fled to the Andredsweald.[2] But the weakness of the invading force is shown by the slowness with which the Chronicle of the conquerors pictures Ælle as fighting his way in battle after battle across the streams which cleave this strip of coast on their way to the Channel.[3] It was only after fourteen years of struggle that the

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 15.

[2] E. Chron. a. 477. Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 54. The brief entries of the Chronicle are largely expanded by Henry of Huntingdon, who may have used poems or annals still extant in his time, and whose story here at least falls in with the geographical features of the locality.

[3] E. Chron. a. 485, for the fight at Mearcredsburn.

Saxons reached the point where the South Downs abut on the sea at Beachy Head, and dipped down in the district that formed the mouth of the Weald, a district guarded by the fortress of Anderida, whose massive walls still cover a rise above the general level of the coast at a spot which under its later name of Pevensey was to witness the landing of a greater conqueror in William the Norman.

The siege of Anderida proved a long and a difficult one.   Eastward of the fortress the ground lifts slowly towards our Hastings, where a sandstone ridge abuts upon the sea.   This Forest-ridge, as it is called, is in fact the termination of a low rise which forms a water-parting through the whole length of the Weald, and which throws down the streams of the Weald to north and south by channels that they have hewn in the chalk downs on either side of it. Then, as now, the ground was covered with woodland and copses, but under the Roman rule the life ' of this district presented a striking contrast to the solitude and silence of the rest of the Andredsweald.[1] Hid in its wooded gorges we find traces of a busy population of miners, the small round pits from which the nodules of their ore was dug, rude smelting-furnaces on the hill-slope, big cinder-heaps, covered nowadays with oak and elm.   It must have been the attacks of these miners that made the task of the besiegers so hard a one.   If we may trust the tradition of a later time,[2] the Britons swarmed like bees round the

Anderida.

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[1] See Wright's description of Pevensey in his "Wanderings of an Antiquary."

[2] Huntingdon, "Historia Anglorum" (ed. T. Arnold), p. 45.

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English lines, assailing them by night, and withdraw-
ing at dawn to the gorges of the Forest-ridge where
they lay in ambush for the parties that attacked them.
An attempt to storm the town would at once draw
the miners on the rear of its assailants ; and when
the besiegers, galled by the storm of arrows and
javelins, turned from their task to encounter these foes,
the Britons drew back to their fastnesses in the Weald.
It was not till Ælle was strong enough to detach a
part of his force to cover the siege that the resistance
of the town came to an end. The terrible words of
the Chronicle tell the story of its fall : the English
" slew all that were therein, nor was there henceforth
one Briton left." [1] The work of slaughter, we can
hardly doubt, was soon completed by the attack and
conquest of the brave iron-workers who had failed to
avert the doom of Anderida ; and from that time to
the days of the Edwards no sound of quarryman or
forge was heard in the gorges of the Forest-ridge.

Bignor.   Of the victories or settlement of the Saxons along
the coast from Chichester to Pevensey we know little
or nothing. Nowhere indeed was the land richer
in plunder ; for the coast had been occupied by the
Romans from the date of their first settlement in
Britain, and the country side was dotted with
the homes of the wealthier provincials. A country-
house such as that whose remains have been
discovered at Bignor, a few miles from Chichester,

[1] E. Chron. a. 491. Huntingdon adds, " Ita urbem distruxe-
runt quod nunquam postea re-edificata est : locus tantum quasi ·
nobilissimæ urbis transeuntibus ostenditur desolatus " (*i.e.* in
the twelfth century).—Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 45.

lights up for us the social life which was swept away
by the Saxon sword.[1]   The household buildings of
this mansion formed a court more than a hundred
feet square, round the inner side of which ran a cov-
ered colonnade, with a tesselated pavement arranged
in fanciful patterns.   Within the house itself the
hall with its central fountain preserved the southern
type of domestic building that the Roman builders
brought from their sunnier land, as the furnace
which heated the floor of the banqueting-room behind
showed the ingenuity with which they accommo-
dated themselves to the needs of a sterner climate.
The walls of the larger rooms glowed with frescoes,
fragments of which retain much of their original
vividness of colour, while their floors were of elaborate
and costly mosaic work.   Figures of dancing nymphs
filled the compartments of one chamber, a picture of
the rape of Ganymedes formed the centre of another,
a third was gay with pictures of the Seasons or of
gladiatorial games, where cupids sported as retiarii
and secutores of the amphitheatre.   But no traces
remain of the line of low huts which here, as else-
where, no doubt, leant against the outer wall that girt
in the circuit of buildings, huts which housed the serfs
who tilled the lands of their owner, and whose squalor,
in its dark contrast with the comfort and splendour
of the mansion itself, would have painted better for
us than a thousand passages from law or chronicle
the union of material wealth with social degradation
that lay like a dark shadow over the Roman world.

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[1] Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 243.   There is a fuller
description in his "Wanderings of an Antiquary."

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*Landing
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Dimly as we trace this winning of the south-eastern coast by the men who were afterwards known as the Sussex or South Saxons, we pass as from light into darkness when we turn to the work of another Saxon tribe who must at about the same time have been conquering and settling on the other side of the Caint, to the north of the estuary of the Thames.[1] In the utter lack of any written record of the struggle in this quarter, we can only collect stray glimpses of its story from the geographical features of this district and from its local names. From both these sets of facts we are drawn to the conclusion that it was not from the Thames that this district was mainly attacked. In that quarter there was little to tempt an invader. The clay-flats which stretch along the coast of Southern Essex were then but a fringe of fever-smitten and desolate fens, while the meadows that rise from them to the west were part of a forest-tract that extended to the marshes of the Lea. The whole region indeed beyond the coast was thick with woodland ; in the Middle Ages all Essex lay within the bounds of the royal forest : and its timber church-towers and log-framed homesteads still recall its wealth of wood. To the northward, however, the country became

[1] Huntingdon (Hist. Angl., ed. Arnold, p. 49) names as the first East-Saxon king, Ercenwine (or as Florence calls him, Æscwine), whose son and successor, Sleda, married the sister of Æthelberht of Kent. As the usage elsewhere was for the conquerors to gather into a kingdom some time after their first conquest, this would bring the landing in Essex to about the time of the landing in Sussex, which is of itself probable enough. Malmesbury makes Sleda their first king (Gest. Reg., ed. Hardy, lib. i. sec. 98).

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somewhat clearer; and here a tempting inlet offered itself in the estuary where the waters of the Chelm and the Stour found a common passage to the sea, and where Camulodunum offered a city to sack.[1] The town stood, like its successor, Colchester, on a steep rise or "dun" round whose northern and eastern sides bent the river Colne. Camulodunum was the oldest of the Roman settlements in Britain: temples and public buildings had already risen indeed within its bounds when the revolt under Boadicea broke the course of Roman conquest. Its size and massive walls[2] prove it to have become in later days one of the busiest and wealthiest towns of the province; and from the after settlement of its foes we may probably gather that the district beneath its sway spread northward as far as the Stour.

Their boundaries.

It was in the valleys of the Colne and Stour that the East Saxons, as these warriors came to be called, seem mainly to have settled after the fall of Camulodunum. But here, as in their other conquest in the south, the settlement of the Saxons was small and unimportant. Neither tract indeed was large or fruitful enough to draw to it any great mass of the conquerors, while from neither was it easy to push across their bounds into more fertile districts. As the South Saxons were prisoned within their

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[1] For Camulodunum, see map in Markham's "Life of Fairfax," p. 309, etc., and Freeman, Archæol. Journal, xxxiv. 47.

[2] The circuit is more perfect than anywhere else in Britain; but the walls themselves have been reconstructed in later days. Freeman, Archæol. Jour. xxxiv. 55. The museum of the town is rich in Roman relics.

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narrow strip of coast by the reaches of the Andreds-
weald, so the East Saxons found themselves as
effectually barred from any advance into the island
by a chain of dense woodlands, the Waltham Chace
of later ages, whose scanty relics have left hardly
more than the names of Epping and Hainault forests.
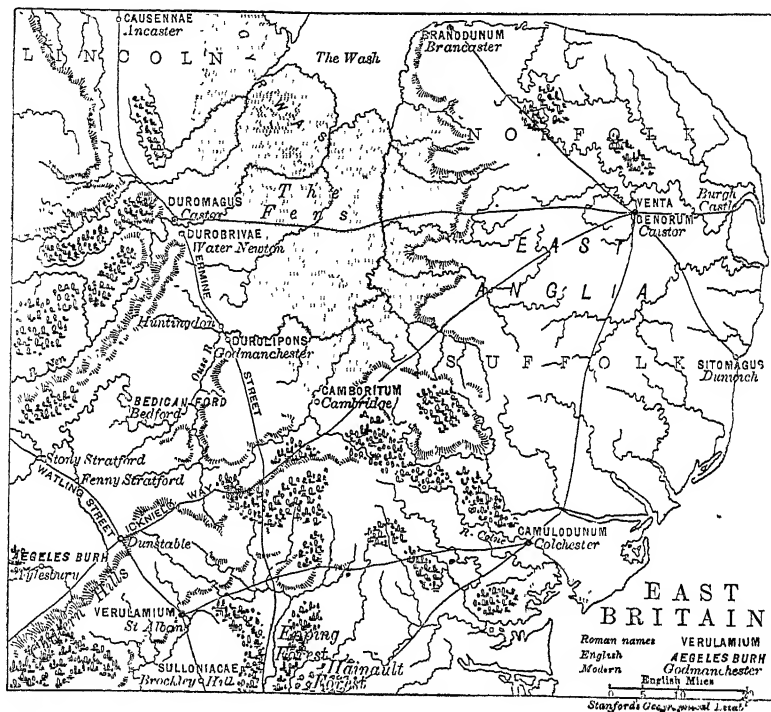
These woodlands, which stretched at this time in
a dense belt on either side the Roding along the
western border of the district that the invaders had
won from the Thames to the open downs above
Saffron Walden, and were backed to the west by the
marshy valley of the Lea, whose waters widened

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into an estuary as it reached the Thames, seem to have been wholly uninhabited, for no trace remains in their area of military stations or of the country houses or burial-places of the provincials. How impassable in fact these fastnesses had been found by the Romans is clear from the fact that even their road-makers never attempted to penetrate them. The lower portion of the Ermine Street, the road to the north, which in later days struck direct through this district from London to Huntingdon, did not exist in Roman times, and the British provincial was forced to make a circuit either by Leicester or Colchester on his way to Lincoln and York.[1]

Landing of the Engle.

This double barrier to the west proved formidable enough to hold the invaders at bay for almost a hundred years. But to the northward no such barrier hindered the East Saxons from sharing in a fight that must have been going on at this time in the chalk uplands which rose to the north of them across the Stour. It is in this district that we first meet with a third race of conquerors, whose work was to be of even greater moment in our history than that of Saxon or Jute. The men who were to spread along the Yare and the Orwell, and to march in triumph through the massive gate which recalls the strength of Roman Lincoln, whose work it was to colonize Mid-Britain and the line of the Trent, as well as to win for their own the vast regions between the Firth of Forth and the Humber, were drawn from a tribe whose name was destined to absorb that of Saxon and Jute, and

[1] Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv. 116.

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to stamp itself on the people which sprang from the union of the conquerors of Britain, as on the land which they won.[1] These were the Engle or English-men. The bulk of the tribes who then bore this name, if in the darkness of their early history they have been rightly traced by modern research, lay probably along the middle Elbe in the country about Magdeburg ; while fragments of the same race were found on the Weser, in what is now known as Lower Hanover and Oldenburg, and in the peninsula which juts from the shores of North Germany to part the Baltic and the Northern Seas.[2]

The East Engle.

It is in the heart of this peninsula that we still find the district which preserves their name of Angeln or the Engleland ; and from the desert state of this district as men saw it hundreds of years afterwards,[3] it would seem that, unlike their Saxon neighbours, the bulk of whom remained in their own homesteads, the whole Engle people forsook their earlier seats for the soil of Britain. Such a transfer would account for the wide area of their conquests. Of their invasion or settlement no chronicle has come down to us,[4]

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[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 15.   [2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 45.

[3] Bæda, H. E. i. 15.

[4] Of the conquest of East Anglia, Lincolnshire, the Fen-land, Mid-Britain, and Yorkshire, we have no record, either on the part of conquered or conquerors. In Northumbria the Chronicle tells only the fact of Ida's elevation to the kingship and seizure of Bamborough ; while Nennius preserves a faint tradition of some of the earlier conflicts. We are forced, therefore, to fall back on the indications given us by archæology and by the physical character of the ground itself in attempting a rough sketch of the English advance.

but their first descents seem to have been aimed
against the upland into which the northernmost
chalk-rises that diverge from the Berkshire downs
widen as they reach the sea. This tract, which
comprises our present shires of Norfolk and Suffolk,
had drawn settlers to it from the earliest times of
British history. It had been the seat of the Iceni,
the most powerful of the tribes among whom the
island had been parted before the Roman rule, and
whose name, like that of the "Gwent" in which they
lived, was preserved in a Venta Icenorum that was
the predecessor of our Norwich. The downs which
form its western portion were for the most part
stretches of heath and pasture, over which wandered
huge flocks of bustards; but in the river-courses
that break through the levels of clay and gravel
between these downs and the sea, population and
wealth had grown steadily through the ages of
Roman rule; and the importance of the country
was shown by the care with which the provincial
administration had guarded its coast.

The district formed in fact the last unconquered
remnant of the Saxon Shore. But only their ruins
tell us of the fall of its strongholds, of Brancaster on
the shore of the Wash, or of Garianonum at the mouth
of the Yare; while not even its ruins remain to tell of
the fall of Venta Icenorum, or of the conquest of the
district that lay around it. All we learn from the
scanty record of later days is that the assailants of
this region came direct from the German shores; that
their attacks were "many and oft"; and that countless
strifes between these little parties and the ealdormen

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who headed them broke their war against the British.[1]
From the size of the later hundreds we may perhaps
gather that the conquerors settled thickly over the
soil,[2] while their local names lead us to believe that
offshoots from the Saxon houses who were conquering
on the Colne joined the Engle in their attack on the
Gwent.[3] The very designations of Norfolk and Suffolk
tell how one folk of the conquerors fought its way
inland from the estuary at Yarmouth up the valleys
of the Ouse, the Wensum the Yare, and the Waveney,
to the northern half of the upland, while another and
a lesser folk struck up from the common mouth of
the Orwell and the Stour to the southern downs.[4]
Norwich, no doubt, formed the central settlement of

[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 48. "Eâ tempestate
venerunt multi et sæpe de Germaniâ, et occupaverunt East-Angle
et Merce ; sed necdum sub uno rege redacta erant.　Plures autem
proceres certatim regiones occupabant, unde innumerabilia bella
fiebant : proceres vero, quia multi erant, nomine carent."

[2] One Norfolk hundred, that of Humbleyard, contains less
than 23,000 acres, or less than many single townships in York-
shire or Lancashire.

[3] See lists in Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 456, etc.

[4] Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe (i. 260), in one of the appendices to
his work, fixes approximately the date of this conquest : "Regno
posterius Cant-wariorum, et prius regno Occidentalium Saxonum,
exortum est regnum Orientalium Anglorum," i.e. its "kingdom"
was set up between 455 and 519.　Bæda, speaking of Rædwald,
who was king of the East Angles at the close of the sixth century,
calls him "filius Tytili, cujus pater fuit Vuffa, a quo reges
Orientalium Anglorum Vuffingas appellant." (H. E. ii. 15.)
If Uffa was the first king, the beginning of the kingdom cannot
be thrown much further back than the latter date of 519 ; and
as we must allow for a period of isolated conquests and anarchy
before this date the first descents of the East Engle cannot be
far from the time at which we have placed them.

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of the
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the one folk, as Sudbury may have formed that of the other ; and though there are enough common names among each to show what their after history implies —that there was no deep severance between them— the far greater number of local designations which are peculiar to either districts[1] points to a real individuality in the "folks" who conquered them. From the downs the conquerors again pushed inland to the flats at their feet, and the vale of the little Ouse was included in their territory. But they cannot have been vigorous assailants of the towns about the Wash, if the rampart which runs across Newmarket Heath from Rech to Cowledge was, as is possible, their work.[2] The Devil's Dyke, as this barrier is called, is clearly a work of defence against enemies advancing from the Fens, and as a defence to the East Anglians it was of priceless value, for stretching as it did from a point where the country became fenny and impassable to a point where the woods equally forbad all access, it covered the only entrance into the country they had won. But if the dyke be a work of the conquerors of this part of the coast, its purely defensive character shows that their attack was at an end ; and that it was rather as assailants than as a prey that they regarded the towns of central Britain.

But even if the invaders were forced to halt at this

Saxon Shore conquered.

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[1] See the lists in Kemble, " Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 456.

[2] Its ditch faces towards Cambridgeshire and the Fens (Cam-den's "Britannia," 1753, vol. i. 487). It was the boundary of the kingdom as well as of the diocese of East Anglia. The name is probably a Christian version of Woden's dyke or Wansdyke.

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stage of their advance, they were now firmly planted on British soil. With the settlement of East Anglia the conquest of the Saxon Shore was complete, and the whole coast of Britain from the Wash to Southampton Water was in the hands of the invader. Its fortresses were broken down. Its towns were burned and desolate. A new people was planted on its soil. Even if we look on the dates given by English tradition as at best approximations to the truth, they can hardly be wrong when they point out this district as having been the first to be won, and as having taken long years in the winning. It is indeed the slow progress of the invaders, and the bitterness which would naturally spring from so protracted a struggle, that best accounts for the differences which even a casual examination of the map discloses between the settlement of the conquerors here and their settlement in central or northern Britain; for nowhere is the English settlement so thick, nowhere do we find the tribal houses so crowded on the soil, or the hundreds, in which the settlers grouped themselves, so small and so thickly clustered.[1]

[1] Kemble, in his "Saxons in England," pointed out that the hundreds along the coast—which he regarded as representing the settlements of the free settlers—were smaller and thicker than those of the interior: and as regards the Saxon Shore, this is true enough. Elsewhere it does not apply in the same degree; and Professor Stubbs urges that "Gloucester and Wiltshire are as minutely subdivided as Devonshire and Dorsetshire" (Const. Hist. i. 113, note). But this hardly tells against the identification of the smaller hundreds with the earlier settlements, as Devon and Dorset are, like Gloucestershire, among later conquests, or against the truth of Kemble's statement if it be restricted to the Saxon Shore.

CHAPTER II.

CONQUESTS OF THE ENGLE.

c. 500—*c.* 570.

To the province the loss of the Saxon Shore must have been a terrible loss; for with its conquest Britain was cut off from the Continent, she was isolated from the rest of the civilized world, and a fresh impulse must have been given to the anarchy that had begun in the strife of her Romanized and Celtic populations. But greatly as it might weaken Britain, the loss of this tract was far from throwing her open to the invaders. We have seen what barriers held back the Jute of Kent and the Saxon on either side of him; but barriers as impassable held back the Engle of the eastern Gwent, for the forest-line which began on the Thames reached on along their western frontier to the Wash, and the Wash stretched to the northward from Newmarket to the sea. The fens which occupied this huge break in the eastern coast of Britain covered in the sixth century a far larger space than now;[1] for while they

<div style="text-align: right;">*Barriers of Britain.*</div>

[1] Pearson's Historical Maps of England, p. 3, and map of " Britannia Romana."

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stretched northward up the Witham almost as far
as Lincoln, and southwards up the Cam as far as
Cambridge, they reached inland to Huntingdon and
Stamford, and the road between those places skirted
their bounds to the west.   So vast a reach of tangled
marsh offered few temptations to an invader ; and we
shall see grounds at a later time for believing that the
Gyrwas, as the Engle freebooters who found a home
in its islands called themselves, were for a long time
too weak to break through the line of towns that
guarded its inner border.

*Conquest
of
Lindsey.*

Had the invaders pushed inland only from this
quarter, therefore, the resistance of the Britons might
have succeeded in prisoning them within the bounds
of the Saxon Shore, as that of Gaul at a later day
prisoned the Northmen within the bounds of Nor-
mandy.   But the sixth century can hardly have been
long begun when each of the two peoples who had
done the main work of conquest opened a fresh attack
on the flanks of the tract they had won.   On its
western flank, as we shall see, the Saxons appeared in
the Southampton Water.   On its northern flank the
Engle appeared in the estuaries of the Forth and of
the Humber.   To the south of this last great opening
in the coast the oolitic range that stretches across
Mid-Britain from the Cotswolds through Northamp-
tonshire abuts on the waters of the river-mouth ;
while to the east of the oolites, across the muddy
stream of the Ancholme, rises a parallel line of chalk
heights, cut off from the chalk-upland of East Anglia
by the Wash.   As it extends to the south the oolitic
range is broken by a deep depression through which

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the Witham makes its way to the Wash; and to the south of the Witham, over the country which is now known as Kesteven,[1] a mass of dense woodland stretched from the fen-country about Boston across the heights into the basin of the Trent. The two uplands, however, which lay to the north of this wold tract formed even then a populous and fertile part of Britain. Roman industry had begun the work of draining its marshes; its long reaches of heath were already broken with farms and home-steads; and the houses which lay dotted over the country side show by the character of their ruins that its landowners were men of wealth and culture. The Ermine Street from the south struck like an arrow from Stamford through the woods of Kesteven along the crest of the heights, to drop suddenly into the valley of the Witham as it breaks through them; and uniting with the Fosse Road from the Trent valley as it crossed the river, again climbed the steep slope on the other side of the gap, over which streams nowadays in picturesque confusion the mo-dern city of Lincoln. At the edge of the tableland to which this ascent leads, on a site marked by the minster and castle that now tower over the city, stood the square fortress of the first Roman Lindum; and through this earlier town the road struck by the Portway Gate, which is still left to us, straight onward to the upland without its walls. Here, as elsewhere however, the growth of the place had brought about an extension of its defences; a fortified suburb spread

[1] Camden, "Britannia" (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 554. See Camden's Map of Lincolnshire.

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down the hill in the line of the modern Lincoln to
the stream which even then furnished an important
inlet for the coasting trade of central Britain ; and
since the close of the Roman rule the citizens seemed
to have striven to strengthen their walls by raising
a line of earthworks to the north of the town.[1] But
growth and commerce were alike brought to an end
by the storm which fell on them ; and town and suburb
must have been left a heap of ruins while their con-
querors spread over the deserted country north of the
Witham and settled down in croft and homestead as
the Lindiswara, the " dwellers about Lindum." [2]

*The
Yorkshire
Wolds.*

The conquest of Lindsey however brought the
Engle little save plunder. The estuary of the Humber,
with a huge swamp that spread along the bed of the
lower Trent, and of which a portion remains in the
Isle of Axholme, girt these uplands in on the north
and north-west ; while over the whole of the modern
shire south of the Witham, from Lincoln to Stamford,
stretched the thick woods of Kesteven, and the
Holland of the Fens. It was only along the Foss-
road from Lincoln to Newark that the country was
open for an advance ; and along this the Lindiswara
may have crept slowly to the Trent. But it was the
effort of another tribe of conquerors that brought
the Engle fairly into the heart of Britain. While
the assailants of Lindsey had been striking from the

[1] See G. T. Clark, " Lincoln Castle," Archæol. Journal, xxxiii.
213. Freeman, " Norman Conquest," iv. 212.

[2] We have no means of dating the settlement of the Lindis-
wara ; but we can hardly be wrong in placing it between that of
the East Engle and the Deirans.

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Humber over the heights and wolds on the south of
its estuary, other Engle adventurers must have been
seizing the flat promontory or naze at the mouth of
the Humber to which they gave the name of Holder-
ness. Fertile as drainage has now made this district,
it can then have been little more than a narrow line
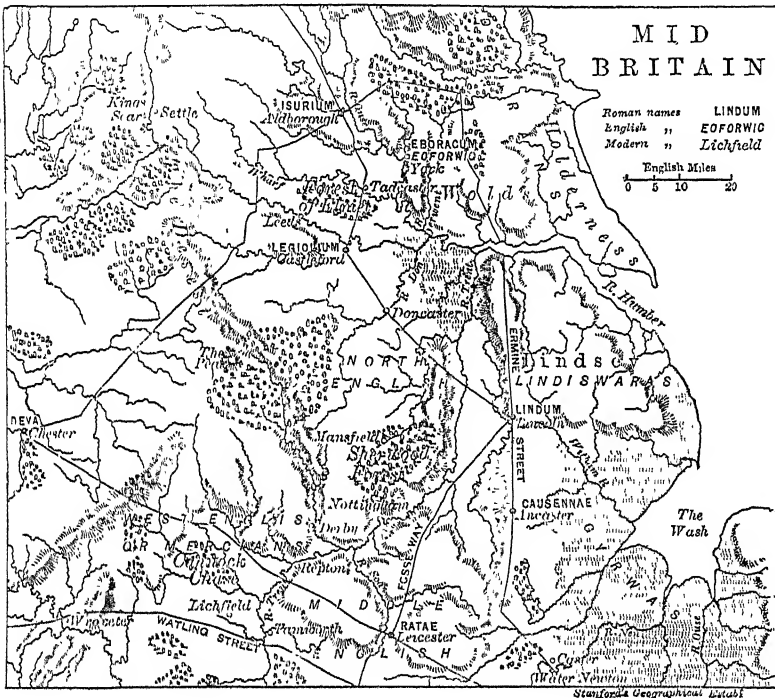
of mud flats, which offered small temptation for settle-
ment. But across the stream of the Hull, in whose
marshy and desolate channels men hunted the beaver
which gave its name to our Beverley, the ground
rises gently to a crescent of chalk-downs, the wolds
that run from the Humber by Market-Weighton to

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the cliffs of Flamborough Head. Though dykes and gravel-mounds scar their surface, the want of water would have always prevented any settlement on these wolds ; they must have been at this time mere sheep-walks, as they remained till half a century ago, and could be easily overrun by the invader. The Wolds, however, were hardly mastered when their conquerors looked on a richer and more tempting country. To north and to west the chalk-heights plunge abruptly down steep slopes of scanty turf to a plain at their feet, through which the stream of the Derwent bends from its rise beside the sea on the east to pour its waters into the Humber. The springs that break from the base of the cliffs make the lower Derwent vale a rich and fertile country ; and here, as the local names show, the houses of the conquerors, the Deirans as they came to call themselves, were thickly planted. The district about Weighton seems to have been chosen as the sacred ground of their settlement ; and a temple of their gods is said by local tradition to have stood in the village of Goodmanham.[1] On the north the narrower space of the upper vale forced them to hug the heights more closely ; though the fall of Derventio, which lay probably on the site of Malton, would open to them the country round it, where their kings in later days found a favourite home.[2] Holderness, the Wolds, and the valley of the Derwent now form the East Riding of Yorkshire ; and it is likely enough that

[1] The site of the temple was shown in Bæda's day (H. E. ii. 13).   [2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

this local division preserves, however roughly, the
boundaries of the earlier kingdom of the Deirans.
But they were soon drawn onward. Beyond the
green meadows at the feet of the Wolds stretched
away to the westward and the northward one of the
richest and most fertile regions in Britain. Country
houses of rich landowners studded thickly the tract
of red marls that spreads along the Wharfe and the
Ouse; and in the midst of this level stood the city of
York or Eboracum,[1] once the capital of Britain. The
town lay on a tongue of land between the broad
channel of the Ouse and the bed of a lesser stream,
the Foss, which came through a marshy and difficult
country from the woodlands beneath the Wolds. To
the military importance and strength of its position
were doubtless due the existence of the camp whose
limits are still marked by the small square of massive
walls that enclosed in Trajan's day the earlier Roman
city.[2] But the town soon overleapt these bounds.

[1] Phillips (Archæol. Journal, vol. x. 183) infers from a study
of roads, etc., that "Eboracum was not situated on the earliest
track of the middle road to the north. That track in fact went
from near Tadcaster to Aldborough, leaving York ten miles to
the right. But at the epoch of the Antonine Itinerary the direct
route was abandoned, and the deviation through Eboracum
substituted." Freeman, "Norman Conquest," iv. 202, and Raine,
"Historians of the Church of York," i. præf. (Rolls series), throw
light on the early topography of York, whose Roman antiquities
may be studied in the "Eboracum" of Drake and the "Ebura-
cum" of Wellbeloved.

[2] A broken tablet in the York Museum, which tells of work
done by the ninth legion in Trajan's day, is the earliest monu-
ment of Eboracum. Another, of a Decurio, shows the form
taken by its municipal administration.

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Placed as it was at the head of the tidal waters of
the Ouse, and forming the natural centre of northern
Britain, it became under Severus the seat of the pro-
vincial government and the headquarters of the force
which guarded Britain against the Picts. Before the
close of the Roman rule it covered the whole area of
the modern city on either side of the Ouse, while
beyond it lay suburbs a mile in length and roads
lined with tombs.[1] As the dwelling-place of the
Cæsar Constantius, York became for a while one of
the Imperial cities of the Empire. It was yet more
illustrious as the birthplace of Constantine, and as
the spot from which he started on that wonderful
career which changed the face of the world. The
work of Constantine left its traces on Eboracum, as

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[1] The wealthier class of burghers and officials are found
buried along the road to Calcaria or Tadcaster. It is from these
tombs that the relics of Roman life preserved at York have
mostly been drawn, fragments of the fine Samian ware brought
for rich citizens' use from the Continent, curious egg-shell pottery,
vases·and cups from a woman's toilet-case, sepulchral figures of
soldiers and citizens, and the like. On the right bank of the
Ouse, at a short distance to the right of the road to Calcaria,
was discovered, in 1873 (Murray's "Yorkshire," p. 70), a "ceme-
tery for a poorer class than that which raised its monuments
nearer to the great road, and for some distance along its course.
In some parts of the ground Roman carters had been in the
habit of shooting rubbish from the neighbouring city. There
were thick strata of Roman bricks, mortar, and pottery, mingled
with fragments of wall plaster, on which coloured patterns were
distinct. Adjoining this rougher portion of the cemetery two
or three deep pits or putei were found, into which, as was usual,
the bodies of slaves had been thrown carelessly and pell-mell, as
was evident from the confused mass of bones in all possible
positions."

on the rest of the Empire ; its bishop took his place
beside the Imperial Vicar ; and the shrines of Serapis
and Mithras, which were frequent in the older city,
were superseded by a Christian basilica.   With the
departure of the Roman administration, however, and
with the inroads of the Pict, the glory of the city
passed away ; but it remained a strong and wealthy
place, the head, it may be, of a confederacy of the
neighbouring cities to which its high-roads led ; and
the marks of its greatness survived in the lofty walls [1]
and towers which awed Alcuin two centuries later,
as well as in the "proofs of Roman refinement"
that were still ·visible in the days of William of
Malmesbury.[2]

In the century that had passed since the close of
the Roman rule York had probably felt the need of
additional defence ; and modern inquiry has detected
the work of its citizens in the mound of earth which
encloses the modern city and which serves as a base
for its later wall.[3]   But the effort proved a fruitless
one, and after a struggle whose incidents are lost for
us, the town like its neighbour cities lay a desolate

[1] One noble fragment of its wall survives in a bastion, cased
with neat masonry of small ashlar blocks, which are broken
by a line of red brick.   The tower is embowered nowadays
in greenery and gay with flowers.   From its base the ground
falls in steep slopes to the river, lying deep in what is still a
green ravine.   This tower stood at the south-west angle of the
Roman city.

[2] Raine, "Hist. of Church of York," i. præf. xiii. who adds, " In
no other Roman city in Britain have remains of equal number
and importance been discovered." (xv.)

[3] G. T. Clark, " The Defences of York," Archæol. Journal,
vol. xxxi. 232.

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ruin, while its conquerors spread slaying and burning along the valley of the Ouse.[1] Along its southern course, indeed, there was little worth the winning. The moorlands that lie close to York on the west run onwards to the Peak of Derbyshire in a wild region of tumbled hills, traversed but by a few pack-roads,[2] a region which formed a British kingdom that for a hundred years to come defied the arms of the invaders;[3] and though these moorlands of Elmet sheer away from the Ouse as it passes to the Humber, the broadening level which stretched along its lower course, as along the lower channels of the Wharfe, the Aire, and the ·Don that come down to it from the moors, was then a wild waste of oak-forest and fen.[4] Through this tract in the narrow strip of open tillage between the marshes and the edge of Elmet, ran the one road which led from central Britain to the plain of York, crossing the Don at Doncaster and its two fellow-rivers at Castleford and at Tadcaster, where it bent sharply aside to Eboracum. The fall of these cities must have accompanied the conquest of this district, but the towns seem to have been small, and save at Calcaria the country would furnish small room for settlement.

[1] " Every Roman station and house in the north shows traces of having been destroyed by fire."—Raine, " Hist. of Ch. of York," i. præf. xvii.

[2] Phillips traces and examines these. Archæol. Journ. vol. x. p. 181.

[3] This district answers roughly to the present West Riding.

[4] This was the district of Hatfield Chase, a northern outlier of the great fen through which the Trent made its way to the Humber.

North of York, as the road crossed the Don and
struck up the Swale by Catterick[1] to the Tees, a
fairer and wider tract opened before the invaders, and
the peasants of Aldborough show on the flooring of
their cottages mosaic pavements that bear witness to
the luxury and refinement which passed away in the
wreck of Isurium.[2] It was along this central plain, how-
ever, that the Deirans could alone find booty. The
cliff-like face of the Hambleton Hills, towering over
a forest[3] that extended along the Ouse on its eastern

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[1] Cataractonium seems from its remains to have been little more
than a small walled station, from which the northern road struck
across the desolate moors to the wall, while a side-track ran
north-westward to Lavatræ, or Bowes, in Cumberland.

[2] Isurium can have been little inferior to York in size or
wealth. As the forest of Galtres blocked all passage east-
ward of the Ouse, it was by the western bank of the river that
the main road struck to the north across the lower channel of the
Nidd and the passage over the Ure at Isurium. As commanding
this passage, Isurium was a military point of some importance,
but it was also important as the point of junction of this great
northern main-road with a road which came from the vale of
Malton and Derwent to the east, skirting the northern edge of
Galtres forest, along the slopes of the Hambleton Hills, as with
a second which came directly from Tadcaster and the south, and
a third which came from Ilkley and the western moors. The rude
masses of gritstone, some twenty feet high, which stand in the
fields hard by, and are here known as the "Devil's Arrows,"
suggest an equal importance in yet earlier ages, as do possibly
the large round mounds that stand outside the city walls, and
one of which still remains. From the existing traces of founda-
tions, the city must have been a closely-packed mass of narrow
lanes. "Traces of fire," we are told, "are still visible on parts
of the walls."

[3] The later forest of Galtres formed a relic of this woodland.
Even in the Middle Ages Galtres extended from the walls of
York as far northward as Easingwold and Craik, and as far

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bank just above York, guarded moorlands which stretched from the vale of Derwent to that of the Tees; and it was only along the little stream-courses which ran down to the vale of Pickering, or in the openings which break the line of its coast, that the Engle can have settled in the lonely wilds which they named "Cliff-land" or Cleveland. Nor can their settlements have been thicker in the moorlands that fronted them on the north-west. The border line of Yorkshire still marks the furthest bounds to which they drove the Britons as they won their way up Wharfedale, or traversed the wide dip of Ribblesdale, or pushed across broad pastures and through primæval woods that sheltered the wolf and the wild white oxen over the gap of Stainmore along the road from Catterick to Carlisle.[1]

The conquered Britons. If history tells us nothing of the victories that laid this great district at the feet of its conquerors, the spade of the archæologist has done somewhat to eastward as Castle-Howard. In Leland's day the part of the forest between Castle-Hutton and York was, near York itself, "moorish and low ground, and having little wood, in the other part higher and reasonably wooded." It then abounded in wild deer. So lonely was the waste north of York that travellers often lost their way when making for the city.

[1] The story of a flight of an "Archbishop Sampson" from York on its fall about A.D. 500 to Brittany is simply an invention of the twelfth century, and part of the struggle of the church of Dol against the claims of the see of Tours. (Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils of Great Britain," i. 149, note.) But the date of the fall of York may be fairly accurate. The first King of the Deirans was Ælla, the son of Yffi, whose reign began in 559 (Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe, i. 268); and we may therefore probably date their invasion as going on during the forty or fifty years before that time.

reveal the ruin and misery of the conquered people. CHAP. II.

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The caves of the Yorkshire moorlands preserve traces
of the miserable fugitives who fled to them for
shelter.   Such a cave opens on the side of a lonely
ravine, known now as the King's Scaur, high up
in the moors beside Settle.[1]   In primæval ages
it had been a haunt of hyænas who dragged thither
the mammoths, the reindeer, the bisons, and the
bears that prowled in the neighbouring glens.   At
a later time it became a home of savages, whose
stone adzes and flint knives and bone harpoons are
still embedded in its floor.   But these too vanished in
their turn, and this haunt of primitive man lay lonely
and undisturbed till the sword of the English in-
vaders drove the Roman provincials for shelter to the
moors.   The hurry of their flight may be gathered
from the relics their cave-life has left behind it.   There
was clearly little time to do more than to drive off
the cattle, the swine, the goats, whose bones lie
scattered round the hearth-fire at the mouth of the
cave, where they served the wretched fugitives for
food.   The women must have buckled hastily their
brooches of bronze or parti-coloured enamel, the pecu-
liar workmanship of Celtic Britain, and snatched up
a few household implements as they hurried away.
The men, no doubt, girded on as hastily the swords,
whose dainty sword-hilts of ivory and bronze still
remain to tell the tale of their doom, and hiding in
their breast what money the house contained, from
coins of Trajan to the wretched " minims " that showed

[1] Boyd Dawkins, " Cave Hunting," pp. 81-125, has given a
full account of the series of remains found in this cave.

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c. 570.

the Empire's decay, mounted their horses to protect their flight. At nightfall all were crouching beneath the dripping roof of the cave or round the fire that was blazing at its mouth, and a long suffering began in which the fugitives lost year by year the memory of the civilization from which they came. A few charred bones show how hunger drove them to slay their horses for food ; reddened pebbles mark the hour when the new vessels they wrought were too weak to stand the fire, and their meal was cooked by dropping heated stones into the pot. A time seems to have come when their very spindles were exhausted, and the women who wove in that dark retreat made spindle whorls as they could from the bones that lay about them.

Northern Britain.

While the Engle were thus mastering the future Yorkshire from the estuary of the Humber, they were making an even more important settlement in the estuary of the Forth. No district of Britain had been the scene of so long a conflict as the country between the Firth of Forth and the Tyne. Throughout the period of the Roman rule this border had been a battle-ground. The Roman conquest of Southern Britain indeed was hardly completed when the pressure of the unconquered tribes to the north forced Hadrian to guard the province by a barrier drawn right across this tract of country.[1] A massive wall, backed to the south by an earthen rampart and a ditch, and strengthened by military stations and watch-towers along its course, stretched for seventy

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[1] Dr. Collingwood Bruce has summed up all we know of this barrier in his volume on "The Roman Wall."

miles across the wild moorlands between the thin strips of cultivated ground which then lined the mouth of the Solway or the Tyne. Nothing gives a livelier picture of Roman Britain on its military side than the remains of this wall and the monuments we find among its ruins. With the departure however of the legion that garrisoned this barrier its whole line must have been left desolate. The towns in its course were merely military stations, which could contribute nothing to its defence when the garrison was withdrawn, and which would be left as deserted as the wall itself. The ground which it traversed indeed was for the most part a waste that could furnish few supplies for its inhabitants; and the troops and camp-followers who held the barrier must have been provided with food and supplies from the headquarters at Eboracum. Even had a national force been ready to take the place of the legions, the maintenance of such a garrison involved an organization and expense which can hardly have been possible for the broken province; and the great barrier probably sank at once into solitude and ruin, while the Picts poured unmolested into the country which it guarded. Marks of their havoc may perhaps still be traced in the station that occupied the site of Maryport to the south of Carlisle, amidst whose ruins we find a tower-gate broken down by violence, and the houses of its main street charred with fire.[1] Further south, at Ribchester on the Ribble; amongst the burned wreck of the town, have been found skeletons of men

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c. 570.

[1] Wright, " Celt, Roman, and Saxon," 452.

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*The
Engle in
Northern
Britain.*

who may have made their last stand against the savage marauders.

Raids such as those of the Picts however, destructive as they must have been, were but passing incidents in the life of Northern Britain, for like the later Highlander the Pict seems to have gathered his booty only

NORTH BRITAIN.

British names		Brynoich
Roman	,,	EBORACUM
English	,,	EOFORWIC
Modern	,,	*York*

English Miles
0 5 10   20   30   40
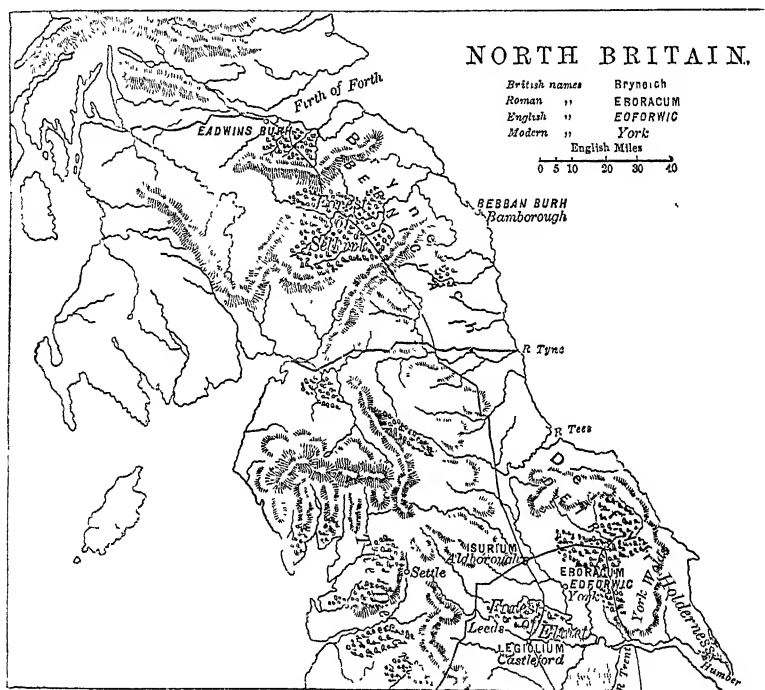
to withdraw with it to his native hills; and on the western coast, which was mainly subject to their incursions, the Britons maintained their political existence for centuries to come. A far greater change was wrought by the marauders who assailed this region from its eastern coast. It is possible that

descents from North Germany had long since planted
Frisian settlers in the valley of the Tweed, and that
it is to their descents that the Firth of Forth owed
its early name of the Frisian Sea.[1]   If this were so,
Northumbria on either side of the Cheviots cannot
have been strange to the German freebooters ; and
the withdrawal of the legionaries would soon be
followed by their appearance off its coasts.   But it
is not till long after this time that we catch any
historical glimpses of English attack.[2]   Through the
dim haze of northern tradition we see a chieftain[3]
struggling in battle after battle at the opening of
the sixth century against invaders whose earlier raids
reach to the Lennox, but who are gradually held at
bay within the basin of the Tweed.   Here however
they seem by the middle of the sixth century to have
made themselves masters of the ground.   Along
Lothian, or the coast between Lammermoor and the
Forth, they had pushed to the little stream of the

[1] Skene, " Celtic Scotland," i. 191.   Nennius calls it " Mare
Freisicum," cap. 38.

[2] Nennius, sec. 56, 57.   Nennius says that after Hengest's
death, his son Octa passed from this district into Kent.   There is
nothing impossible in a Jutish attack on this coast at this early
date : and it receives some support from Malmesbury, " Gesta
Regum," ed. Hardy, i. p. 61, " annis enim uno minus centum
Nordhanhimbri duces communi habitu contenti, sub imperio Can-
tuaritarum privatos agebant," till Ida's choice as king, in 547.

[3] Nennius sec. 56.   This is the Arthur, so famous afterwards
in romance.   Mr. Skene, who has done much to elucidate these
early struggles, has identified the sites of these battles with
spots in the north (see his " Celtic Scotland," i. 153, 154, and
more at large his " Four Ancient Books of Wales," i. 51–58) ;
but as Dr. Guest has equally identified them with districts in the
south, the matter must still be looked upon as somewhat doubtful.

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Esk, where their way was barred by the rock-fortress of Myned Agned, the site of the later Edinburgh ; while south of the Lammermoor they had advanced along the loops of the Tweed as far as the vale of the Gala-Water, and up the dales and streamlets which lie to the south and to north of it, till their advance was thrown back from the wilder hill country on the west. Here the border line of the Cattrail[1] as it strikes through Ettrick Forest marks the border of Welsh and Engle. A barrier as difficult curved round to the south in the line of the Cheviots ; but between the extremity of this range and the sea a thin strip of coast offered an open pathway into the country beyond the Tweed ; and Ida,—" the Flame-bearer " as the Britons called him,—a chieftain of the invaders, whom they raised in 547 to be their king, seized in this quarter a rock beside the shore, and established a base for further conquest in the fortress of Bamborough.[2]

Their settlement.

In these earlier conquests of the Bernicians, as Ida's folk were called, the settlement was as complete as in the rest of Britain. Their homes indeed must have been scantily sprinkled over the wild and half-reclaimed country ; but scant as they were, these " hams " and " tons " told as plainly as in other dis-

[1] See Skene, " Celtic Scotland," i. 162.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 547 (probably from the short chronicle annexed to Bæda's history). Bamborough, it tells us, was first enclosed by a hedge or stockade, and then by a wall. Nennius (sec. 63) says that the place took the name of Bamborough from Bebbe, the wife of Æthelfrith. It is some sixteen miles south-east of Berwick. This setting up of a kingdom under Ida is our only certain date for the Bernician settlement, and would place its probable beginning at a time which could not have been long after A.D. 500.

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tricts the tale of English colonization. Dodings and Livings left their names to hamlets like Doddington and Livingston; along the wild coast Tynings and Coldings made their fisher-villages at Tyningham and Coldingham; while Elphinston and Edmonston preserve the memory of English Elphins and Edmonds who raised their homesteads along the Teviot and the Tweed. Nowhere indeed has the English tongue been preserved in greater purity than in the district which now calls itself southern Scotland.[1] But the years that had been spent in winning this narrow tract show that the Bernician force was but a small one; and the continued slowness of their southward advance from Bamborough proves that even after the union under Ida their strength was but little increased. Aided as they were by a civil strife which was breaking the strength of the north-western Britons,[2] Ida and Ida's six sons had to battle along the coast for half a century more before they could drive the Welsh over the western moorlands, and claim for their own the little valleys of the streams which fell from these moors to the sea through the modern Northumberland.[3]

[1] See Murray, "Northumbrian English."

[2] Thus Ida's third successor, Hussa, fought against four British kings, Urbgen, Riderchen, Guallanc, and Morcant (Geneal. at end of Nennius). These petty chieftains show how the country was broken up. See for this war, Skene, "Four Ancient Books of Wales," i. 336 *et seq.*

[3] Our knowledge of the struggle is drawn from what seems to be a bit of genuine Northumbrian chronicle, embedded in the compilation of Nennius, sec. 63. The strife was long and doubtful; "in illo tempore aliquando hostes, nunc cives, vincebantur." Ida reigned till 559 (Eng. Chron. a. 547).

From the wild moors of Northumbria however we must pass southward to what was probably a yet later scene of Engle conquest in the valley of the Trent. Little as we know of the winning of the north, we know less of the winning of central Britain, and not a single record has been left of the progress of the
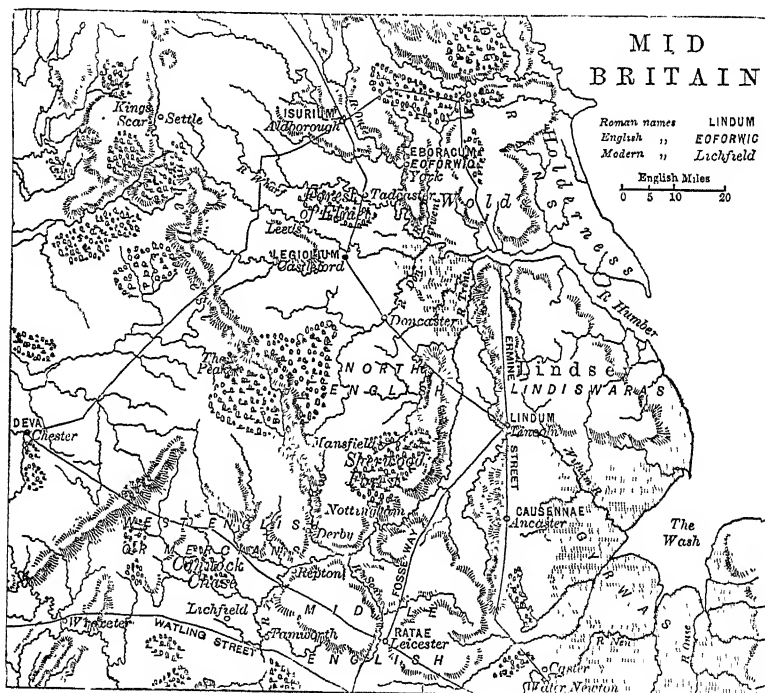
peoples whom we find settled at the close of the century in the districts of our Nottingham, our Leicester, and our Northampton, or on the head waters of the Trent. As their names show, they were of Engle race, and we shall at a later period in our story find reason to believe that their inroads and

settlements cannot have taken place at a very
early period in the sixth century. There was little
indeed at this time to draw invaders to central
Britain. At the close of the Roman occupation the
basin of the Trent remained one of the wildest and
least frequented parts of the island. The lofty and
broken moorlands of the Peak, in which the Pennine
range as it runs southward from the Cheviots at last
juts into the heart of Britain, were fringed, as they
sloped to the plain, by a semicircle of woodlands,
round the edge of which the river bent closely in
the curve which it makes from its springs to the
Humber. On the western flank of the moors a forest
known afterwards as Needwood filled up the whole
space between the Peak and the Trent, as far as our
Burton. On their eastern flank the forest of Sherwood
stretched from the outskirts of our Nottingham to a
huge swamp into which the Trent widened as it reached
the Humber. Here indeed a thin line of clay country
remained open on the northern bank of the river,
but elsewhere it was only on its southern bank that
any space could be found for human settlement. But
even on this bank such spaces were small and broken,
for to the south-west the moorlands threw an outlier
across the river in the bleak upland of Cannock Chase,
which stretched almost to the verge of the Forest of
Arden, a mighty woodland that rolled away far over
southern Staffordshire nearly to the Cotswolds ; while
in the very centre of the valley they threw a second
outlier across the Trent in the rugged fastnesses of
Charnwood, which stretched as far as the outskirts
of Leicester. Even the open oolitic country that

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Attack on
the Trent
valley.

extended from Charnwood to the borders of Lincoln-
shire was narrowly bounded to the south by the
fastnesses of Rockingham forest, which occupied one-
half of the modern shire of Northampton.

It was in this tract, along the southern bank of the
river however, that settlement was most possible, as it
was here that the Trent basin was first accessible to
the new settlers.   While the bulk of the Lindiswara
were slowly pushing their way through the fast-
nesses of Kesteven to their southern border on
the Witham and at Stamford, smaller bodies may
well have been descending into the valley of the
Trent.   From Lindum indeed one of the great
lines of British communication led straight into this
district.   The Fosse Road, as it crossed Britain from
Ilchester to Lincoln, following for the most part
the northern slope of the oolitic range, struck
by Leicester through the broken country to the
south of the Trent before it climbed again to the
upland at Lindum.   If they marched by this road
from their uplands the Lindiswara would touch the
river at Farndon, a village not far from the later
Newark, and the name of the station which occupied
this site [1] (Ad Pontem or Bridge-road) shows that a
bridge here led into the districts across it.   In this
quarter, however, there was little to be won.   On
the rising ground that formed the outskirts of the
Peak, along a line of some twenty miles from our
Nottingham to Worksop, vast masses of oak and birch,

[1] " Ad Pontem " and the Tiowulfing-ceaster which succeeded
it (Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16) have been identified with Newark,
Southwell, and other places.   It seems certainly to be Farndon.

broken by barren reaches of heather, formed the
mighty Sherwood, whose relics may still be seen in
the woods of Welbeck, or Thoresby, or Clumber, and
whose memory lingers in the tale of Robin Hood.[1]
Between forest and river lay but a thin strip of open
clay land, with lifts of soft sandstone here and there

CENTRAL BRITAIN.
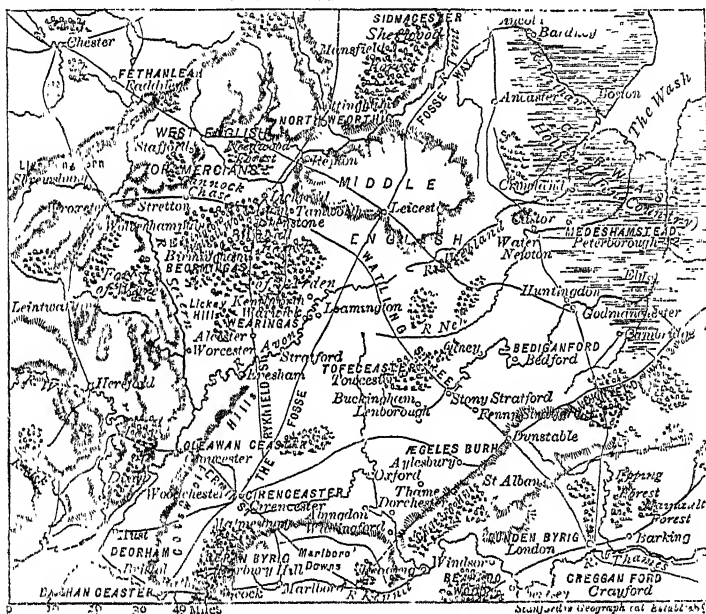
along the banks of the Trent; and on the slopes of one
of these lifts, whose face had been long ago pierced
with the cave-dwellings of primæval man, the house
of the Snotingas fixed a home which has grown into
our Nottingham. But the main settlement of the

[1] The skirts of Sherwood came down to the very north of
Southwell in the valley of the Trent.

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of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c. 570.

Ratæ.

conquerors along the lower Trent must have been in the little dales that break the picturesque wold country that lies to the south of the river, and through which they pushed along its course as far as its junction with the Soar.

Here, however, their course may have been barred for a while. Behind the lower course of the Soar from the neighbourhood of Leicester by the craggy hills of Mount Sorrell, and past Loughborough to the steep rise of Castle Donington beside the Trent, lay the outliers of Charnwood, a rugged tract of granite peaks and dark woodlands that reached westwards as far as Ashby-de-la-Zouch, a tract where—as the later legend of the country-side ran—" a squirrel might hop for miles from tree to tree, and a man journey in summer time from Barden Hill to Beaumanoir without once seeing the sun." Only a few scattered oaks survive of the forest where the Prior of Alverscroft hunted in later days with hawk and hound, or where Ascham found Lady Jane Grey busy with her Plato, but much of the region is still a wild and lonely one, and recalls the great fastness whose front may have held the Engle [1] at bay. But if their advance across the lower Soar was barred, the Fosse Road by which they had descended from the Lincoln heights furnished an easy road to a richer spoil. Bending southward from the line of the Trent, it passed over the wolds to a point where the little Wreak joins the Soar, and then struck along the Soar

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[1] This is, however, a mere inference from the border of Nottinghamshire in this quarter, and the physical character of the country beyond it.

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Conquests
of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c. 570.

to Ratæ. Ratæ, the predecessor of our Leicester,[1]
seems to have been the largest and most important
town in Mid-Britain. Fragments of columns and
capitals, wine-jars and brooches, and mosaic pave-
ments from villas which stood without its gates, are
all that is left nowadays of its glories, though the
basement of a temple of Janus was still recognized
there in the twelfth century,[2] and a big piece of ruined
masonry may preserve the memory of the wall that
yielded to the English onset. When its capture was
over, the site of the town lay lonely and deserted in
the midst of the woodlands through which the Soar
even in the Middle Ages still wound its way to the
Trent ; and the only trace of its older life lingers on
in the name of Leicester,[3] which clung to its ruins
and passed to the town that rose among them as well
as to the shire which represents the settlement of
its conquerors.

The winning of the triangular space of rock and
woodland which stretched from Ashby to the Trent
was probably the latest work of the Middle-English,
as the men of our Leicestershire and perhaps our
Nottinghamshire came to be called,[4] but we cannot

*The
Gyrwas.*

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[1] For Ratæ, see Thompson's "English Municipal History,"
p. 32, and his "Handbook to Leicester." A large number of
Roman remains are preserved in its museum.

[2] By Geoffrey of Monmouth (Hist. Brit. ii. c. 14) who gives
other remains.

[3] "Legoracensis civitas" (Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils,"
iii. 129) in eighth century : Lege-ceaster in tenth.

[4] Bæda gives together "Orientales Angli, Mediterranei Angli,
Merci, tota Nordanhymbrorum progenies," as the Engle peoples
of Mid-Britain (H. E. i. 15), "Middle-Angli, id est, Mediterranei

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of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c. 570.

follow them as they spread over the surface of their new territory, as they pushed along the valley of the Wreak, over the wolds towards Belvoir, or across the marshes of the Nar to the fields of Market Bosworth, or by the upper Soar, here shrunk to a brook, from Ratæ along the Fosse Road to the borders of the great forest of Arden. Arden was a barrier which no doubt brought the invaders for a while to a standstill. But along the upper Soar they would push easily to the slopes of the uplands which lay to the south of them, and where other Engle conquerors were probably already at work. For difficult as were the fastnesses of the Wash, the Gyrwas or Fen-folk must by this time have struggled through them to sack the towns which lay along the course of the road that marked its western edge. Of these towns the northernmost seems to have occupied the site of our Ancaster, amid whose "great square stones of old buildings" and "great vaultes" the ploughshare, as late as the days of the Tudors, disclosed Roman sepulchres and Roman coins.[1] South of this, on a site marked by the village of Caistor on the Nen stood Durobrivæ, the centre of a district covered with potteries, whose kilns were dotted over the country for twenty miles round. Hundreds of potters were employed in the manufacture of its

Angli" (ib. iii. 21). With Diuma began the Bishoprick of the Middle-Engle (ib.) as of the Mercians and Lindiswara. When the large sees were parted by Theodore, Leicester became the seat of that of the Middle-English.

[1] Leland, "Itinerary," i. 28, 29. Archdeacon Trollope has examined the site, etc., of Ancaster in Archæol. Journ. vol. xxvii. 1.

wares; and the hunting-scenes, the scenes of boar-spearing and stag-chasing which they have graven on the surface of their work, lift for us a corner of the veil that shrouds the life of Roman Britain.[1] It must have been the North-Gyrwas, as their country included in later days its neighbour Peterborough,[2]

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Engle.

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c. 570.

who pushed up the Nen to the conquest of Duro-brivæ. Meanwhile the South-Gyrwas were at work along the line of the Ouse and the Cam, where

[1] For Durobrivæ, see Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 263, 264, and a paper by Archdeacon Trollope, Archæol. Journ. vol. xxx. 127. Mr. Artis has given plates of the remains in his "Durobrivæ Illustrated."   [2] Bæda, H. E., lib. iv c. 6.

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of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c 570.

Durolipons, near the present Huntingdon, but on the other side of the river, guarded a bridge over the Ouse, and where some miles to the south-east the country was commanded by the town of Camboritum, whose site in later days became the site of Cambridge.[1] The place was probably of importance ; but so utter was its destruction that even in Bæda's day nothing was left but a few heaps of ruined stone from which the nuns of Ely fetched a sculptured sarcophagus of marble when they sought a tomb for their abbess Æthelthryth.[2]

The Engle in Northampton-shire.

Masters of the road along the borders of the Wash, the Gyrwas would naturally be drawn forward to the upland which juts from the westward into its waters, the upland of Northamptonshire. In this direction however it was difficult of access. The undulating reach of grassy meadows, broken by thick hedgerows or copses, or tree-crowned knolls, and dotted everywhere with oak or elm, which we see in the shire of to-day, was in the close of the sixth century little more than a vast woodland. Yardley Chase and the Forests of Selsey and Whittlebury are but dwindled representatives of a long barrier of copse and thicket that stretched along its south-eastern slopes, and

[1] Even after its break up into shire land the oneness of the South-Gyrwan country was recognised in the fact that there was (at least in Camden's time) but one high sheriff for the whole area. " He is chosen out of Cambridgeshire one year, out of the Isle of Ely the second, and the third out of Huntingdonshire."—Camden's " Britannia," 1753, i. 502.

[2] Bæda, H. E. iv. c. 19. " Venerunt ad civitatulam quandam desolatam . . . . quæ linguâ Anglorum Granta-cæster vocatur ; et mox invenerunt juxtâ muros civitatis locellum de marmore albo pulcherrime factum, operculo quoque similis lapidis aptissime tectum."

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amidst whose fastnesses lay the town which is repre-
sented by our Towcester.   Even as late as the
middle ages the western half of its area, from the
edge of the Fens as far inland as Rockingham and
Kettering, was still one of the largest forests of
the island ; and in earlier days this forest had
stretched yet further towards the Nen.[1]   It was
through this huge woodland that the Engle from
the Wash would have to struggle as they mounted
the upland ; and their progress must have been a
slow one.   Their fellow invaders from the valley
of the Soar had an easier task.   Along the head-
waters of the Nen the upland became clearer : and
though fragments of woodland such as the oak-
woods that lingered on around Althorpe and Holmby
linked Rockingham with the vaster forest of Arden,
and thus carried on the forest line across central
Britain from the Severn to the Wash, yet open spaces
remained for settlement and communication.[2]   It was
across this clearer ground that the Watling Street
struck after it had mounted from Stony-Stratford
and emerged from the woods of Whittlebury ; and
here it was that the bulk of the new settlers raised
their homes around the " home-town " of their tribe,
the Hampton which was known in after days as
Northampton to distinguish it from the South
Hampton beside the Solent.

[1] For Rockingham and its forest, see a paper by Mr. G. T.
Clark, Archæol. Journal, vol. xxxv. p. 209.

[2] By Elizabeth's day sheep-farming, for which this district
was renowned, had made this part of the shire "a great open
pasture" as now.   But the woodlands were still thick about
Towcester and Rockingham. (Camden, "Britannia," ed. 1753,
vol. i. p. 511.)

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of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c. 570.

*The West-
Engle.*

While Engle bands were thus pushing up the
Soar to Ratæ and the upland which formed the
southern brink of the Trent-basin, others must
have been advancing along the great river beyond
the bounds of the Middle-English to near its junction
with the Tame. As they struck to the north up the
valleys of the Derwent and the Dove into the moor-
lands of the Peak, these seem to have become known
as the Pec-sætan, but their settlement in what was
the later Derbyshire would necessarily be a scanty and
unimportant one. Of far greater importance was the
advance of their fellows to the west. Spreading
along the quiet open meadows beside the Tame, the
invaders as they fixed their "worth" of Tamworth
on a little rise above its waters at their union with
the Anker, saw the dark and barren moorlands of
Cannock Chase stretching like a barrier across their
path. Lichfield, "the field of the dead," may, as the
local tradition ran, mark the place of some fight that
left them masters of the ground beneath its slopes;
but the Chase itself was impassable. At either end
of it, however, a narrow gap gave access to the country
in its rear. Between its northern extremity and the
Needwood which lay thick along the Trent, the space
along the channel of the great river was widened by
the little valley of the Sow. Between its southern
end and the dark edge of Arden, which then ran to
the north of our Walsall and Wolverhampton, inter-
posed a like gap of open country through which the
Watling Street passed on its way to the Severn. By
both of these openings the West-Engle, as this folk
of conquerors at first called itself, pushed into the
open tract between Cannock and the low line of

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of the
Engle.

c. 500-
c. 570.

moorlands thrown down from the heights of Mole Cop in the north, which marks the water-parting between the basins of the Severn and of the Trent. Stafford, the " Stone-ford," marks their passage over the Sow to the head-waters of the great river which had led them through the heart of central Britain, though the woods thrown out from Needwood across the district of Trentham must have long hindered them from penetrating to its northern founts. Here however they were brought for a while to a stand ; for that these moorlands long remained a march or border-land between Engle and Welshman we see from the name by which the West-English became more commonly known, the Mercians, or the Men of the March.[1]

[1] The date of the conquest of Mercia can only be a matter of inference, as we have no record of any part of the winning of central Britain. Florence of Worcester, ed. Thorpe (vol. i. 264), says, "post initium regni Cantuariorum principium exstitit regni Merciorum," which tells us nothing ; but if Penda was (E. Chron. a. 626) fifty when he began his reign in 626 (Bæda, ii. 20, seems to put this in 633), he was born about 576, when we may take it his people were already on the upper Trent. This squares with Huntingdon's statement, " Regnum Merce incipit, quod Crida ut ex scriptis conjicere possumus primus obtinuit " (Hist. Angl. ed. Arnold, p. 53), a fact which he inserts between Ceawlin's overthrow at Fethanlea in 584 and his death in 593. Crida, or Creoda, was Penda's grandfather ; " Penda was the son of Pybba, Pybba of Creoda " (Engl. Chron. a. 626). The setting up of a king would no doubt follow here as elsewhere a period of conquest under Ealdormen which would carry us back to near the middle of the century for the first attack on the head-waters of the Trent. The conquests of the Middle-Engle would of course precede those of the Mercians. We may gather from the limits of the Bishoprick of the Mercians that the Pec-sætan of our Derbyshire were only a part of these West-Engle.

CHAPTER III.

CONQUESTS OF THE SAXONS.

c. 500—577.

WITH the settlement of the Mercians the work of the Engle in central and northern Britain was done. But we have still to follow the work of the conquerors who through the same memorable years had been making themselves masters of the south. While the Engle had been winning one flank of the Saxon Shore, the Saxons were as slowly winning an even more important district on its other flank.[1] To westward of the strip of coast between the Andredsweald and the sea which had been won by the war-bands of Ælla, the alluvial flat whose inlets had drawn the South-Saxons to their landing in Chicester Water broadened into a wider tract around a greater estuary, that of the Southampton Water, as it strikes inland from the sea-channels of the Solent and Spithead. This opening in the coast was already recognised as of both military and commercial importance. It was the one break in the long line of forests which,

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[1] From this point we are again on distinctly historic ground, as the Chronicle records every step in the conquest of Wessex.

CHAP. III.

Conquests
of the
Saxons.

c. 500-
577.

whether by the fastnesses of the Andredsweald or by
the hardly less formidable fastnesses of our Dorset,
stretched like a natural barrier along the whole
southern coast of Britain ; for though woodlands lay
even here along the shore, it was in a thin line broken
by the estuary and by the channels of its tributaries,
and cleft by the roads that run from Winchester to
Porchester or along the valley of the Itchen.[1]   By
either estuary or roads it was easy to reach the upland
of the Gwent, and to strike across it into the very
heart of Britain.   The importance of such a point
was shown by the resolute resistance of its defenders ;
and the Saxons who attacked it during the latter
years of the fifth century seem to have failed to
make any permanent settlement along the coast.   The
descents of their leaders, Cerdic and Cynric, in 495 [2]
at the mouth of the Itchen, and a fresh descent on
Porchester in 501,[3] can have been little more than
plunder raids ; and though in 508 [4] a far more serious
conflict ended in the fall of five thousand Britons and
their chief, it was not till 514 that the tribe whose
older name seems to have been that of the Gewissas, but
who were to be more widely known as the West-Saxons,
actually landed with a view to definite conquest.[5]

[1] For these woodlands, see Guest, E. E. Sett. pp. 31, 32.   I
again follow mainly the guidance of this paper, as far as the
West-Saxon conquests are concerned, up to the battle of Bedford.
[2] E. Chron. a. 495.   [3] E. Chron. a. 501.
[4] E. Chron. a. 508, and Huntingdon, H. A. ed. Arnold, p. 46,
who adds that the West-Sexe were aided here by the Kentish
men and South-Sexe.
[5] E. Chron. a. 514.   My inferences from the entries in the
Chronicle are here somewhat different from those of Dr. Guest,

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Conquest of
Hampshire
and Isle
of Wight.

Pushing up the Itchen to the plunder of Winchester, they must have been already masters of the downs around it when they turned to clear the Britons from the forests in their rear; for a fight at Charford on the Lower Avon in 519 seems to mark the close of a conflict in which the provincials were driven from the woodlands whose shrunken remains meet us in the

SOUTH BRITAIN

Roman names - VECTIS, English - SAERO BYRIC, Modern - Chichester
English Miles
0   5   10   20   30

Stanford's Geographical Establ
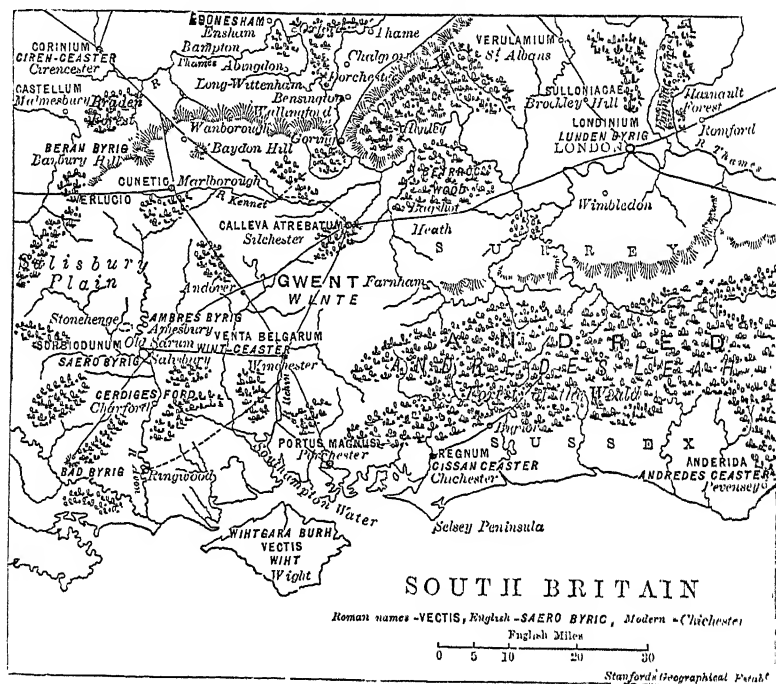
New Forest, and in which the whole district between the Andredsweald and the Lower Avon was secured for English holding.[1] The success at Charford was followed

nor have I felt justified in adopting his ingenious theory as to the struggle of 508. See Guest, E. E. Sett. pp. 55-60.
[1] E. Chron. a. 519; Æthelweard, a. 519.

by the political organization of the conquerors ; and
Cerdic and Cynric became kings of the West-Saxons.[1]
Here, however, their success came to an end.   Across
Avon the forest belt again thickened into a barrier
that held the invaders at bay ; for when in the follow-
ing year, 520, they clove their way through it to the
valley of the Frome, eager perhaps for the sack of a
city whose site is marked by our Dorchester, they were
met by the Britons at Badbury or Mount Badon,[2] and
thrown back in what after events show to have been
a crushing defeat.   The border-line of our Hampshire
to the west still marks the point at which the progress
of the Gewissas was arrested by this overthrow ;[3] and
how severe was the check is shown by the long cessa-
tion of any advance in this quarter.   We hear only
of a single battle of the West-Sexe [4] during the rest
of the reign of Cerdic ; while the Jutes who had aided
in his descents, and who had struck up the Hamble
to a clearing along its course where the villages of
Meon Stoke and West and East Meon still preserve a
memory of their settlement of the Meonwara,[5] turned

[1] E. Chron. a. 519.

[2] Gildas, Hist. sec. 26.   For the identification of this battle
with that of Mount Badon, and of its site with Badbury in
Dorsetshire, see Guest, E. E. Sett. pp. 61-63.

[3] The position of Sorbiodunum, which was still in British
hands, gives at least one firm standpoint in the question of
West-Saxon boundaries at this time.   The limits which Guest
assigns them (E. E. Sett. pp. 64, 65) to north and east—reaching
as far as Cherwell and Englefield—seem to me inconsistent with
their later campaigns ; in fact, I can hardly doubt that Hamp-
shire, as a whole, represents the West-Saxon kingdom after 520.

[4] English Chron. a. 527.

[5] Bæda, H. E. i. 15.   "De Jutarum origine sunt Cantuarii et
Vectuarii, hoc est, ea gens quæ Vectam tenet insulam, et ea quæ

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to the conquest of the island that lay off the Solent. In 530 Cerdic and Cynric subdued the Isle of Wight, but it was in the interest not of their own people, but of its allies, for the new settlers of the island, the Wightgara, whose name survives in their town of Carisbrook or Wight-gara-burh, were not West-Sexe but Jutes.[1] Small as it was, the conquest was a memorable one ; for with it ended for centuries the work of the Jutes in Britain. Causes which are hidden from us must have diverted their energies elsewhere ; the winning of Britain was left to the Saxon and the Engle ; and it was not till Britain was won that the Jutes returned to dispute it with their old allies under the name of the Danes.[2]

Pause of West-Saxons. But the conquest of the isle had hardly less significance for the West-Sexe themselves. If they turned to the sea, it was that landwards all progress seemed denied them. Not only had the woodlands of the coast proved impassable, but the invaders of the Gwent found barriers almost as strong on every side. Higher up on their western border the fortress of Sorbiodunum, or Old Sarum, guarded the valley of the Avon and blocked the way to Salisbury Plain, while to eastward of the Gwent ran the thickets of the Andredsweald, and beneath its northern escarpment stretched a forest which for centuries to come filled

usque hodie in provincia occidentalium Saxonum Jutarum natio nominatur, posita contra ipsam insulam Vectam." Politically the Meonwara went with the Isle of Wight, and not with Wessex. See Wulfere's grant to Ædilwalch ; Bæda, H. E. iv. 13.

[1] See passage quoted above. Bæda, H. E. i. 12.
[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 46.

the valley of the Kennet. The strength of these natural barriers was doubled by strongholds which furnished the Britons with bases for defensive operations as well as with supplies of fighting men, for while Silchester or Calleva barred the march of the Gewissas across the tract between the Andredsweald and the Thames, Cunetio, on the site of our Marlborough, held the downs to the north, and guarded the road that led from Winchester to the Severn valley. How formidable these obstacles were we see from the long inaction of the West-Saxons. While the Engle in the north were slowly fighting their way across Yorkshire or Lincolnshire, their rivals in the south lay quiet for thirty years within the limits of our Hampshire. From the position indeed of their central " tun " of Hampton, our Southampton, it would seem as if their main settlement was still on the coast, and as if the ruins of Winchester were left silent and deserted in the upper downs.

What broke this inaction, whether the Britons had *Sorbiodunum.* grown weaker, or whether fresh reinforcements had strengthened their opponents, we do not know. We hear only that Cynric, whom Cerdic's death left King of the West-Saxons, again took up the work of invasion in 552 by a fresh advance on the west.[1] Winchester was the meeting-point of five Roman roads ; and of these one struck directly westward, along the northern skirts of the woodlands that filled the space between the lower Itchen and the mid-valley of the Avon, to the fortress of Old Sarum.[2] Celt and Roman

[1] E. Chron. a. 552.
[2] See map in Guest ; E. E. Settlements in Southern Britain.

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alike had seen the military value of the height from
which the eye sweeps nowadays over the grassy
meadows of the Avon to the arrowy spire of Salis-
bury ; and admirable as the position was in itself, it
had been strengthened at a vast cost of labour.   The
camp on the summit of the knoll was girt in by a
trench hewn so deeply in the chalk that from the
inner side of it the white face of the rampart rose
a hundred feet high, while strong outworks protected
the approaches to the fortress from the west and from
the east.[1]   Arms must have been useless against such
a stronghold as this ; and, though the Britons were
" put to flight " before its investment, the reduction
of Sorbiodunum was probably due rather to famine
or want of water than to the sword.

*Conquest
of
Wiltshire.*   But its fall brought with it the easy winning of the
district which it guarded, as well as the downs on
whose edge stood the strange monument, then as now
an object of wonder, to which the conquerors as they
marched beside its mystic circle gave the name of the
Hanging Stones, Stonehenge.   The Gewissas passed
over the Stratford, or paved ford by which the road
they had followed from Winchester passed the river, to
the westernmost reaches of the Gwent, the district we
now know as Salisbury Plain.   To the south of them
as they marched, behind the lower Avon and its
little affluent of the Nadder, a broken and woodland
country whose memory lingers in Cranbourne Chase
screened the later Dorsetshire from their arms ;[2] but

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[1] G. J. Clark, " Earthworks of the Wiltshire Avon," Archæol.
Journ. xxxii. 290.

[2] The name of "Britford," which still clings to a passage

in their front the open downs offered no line of
defence, and the Gewissas could push along the road
from Old Sarum unhindered till they reached the
steep slope down which the upland fell into the
valley of the Frome. How roughly their march
was checked at this point by the dense forests which
filled the Frome valley we see from the fact that these
woodlands remained in British hands for more than
a hundred years ; and the significant name of "Mere"
preserves for us the memory of the border-bound
which the Gewissas were forced to draw along the
western steeps of their new conquest. The conquerors
turned back to settle in the land they had won,
in the river valleys which scored the surface of the
downs, in the tiny bends and grassy nooks of the
vale of Avon, or in the meadows along the course of
its affluent, the Wil or Wiley. It was probably in
the last that the main body of the invaders fixed their
home, for it was the Wiley, and the little township,
or Wil-ton, which rose beside it, which gave them
from this time their new name of Wil-sætas. From
this time, indeed, the Gewissas, or West-Saxons, felt
the need of local names for the peoples into which
conquest broke them as they pushed over the
country. But the character of these names shows
the looseness of the bonds that held such "folks"
together. Each knew itself simply as a group of
"sætan" or "settlers" in the land it had won, Wil-
sætan in the lands about the Wiley, Dor-sætan in
the forest track through which wound the "dwr" or

over the Avon in this quarter, may mark a point in the new
border-line where the Briton still faced his foe.

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*Cynric's
advance.*

dark water of the Frome, Somer-sætan or Defna-sætan in lands yet more to the west.

But there was little to detain Cynric in the tiny vales and bare reaches of upland which his arms had as yet given him ; and in 556, only four years after the fall of Old Sarum, he pushed forward again along the road that led from Winchester north-west-ward in the direction of Cirencester and the Severn. Descending the deep escarpment which forms the northern face of the Hampshire downs, he threaded his way through the woodlands of the vale of Pewsey, whose relics survive in the Forest of Savernake, and again mounted the slopes on the further side of them. Here he made himself master of the town of Cunetio and of the upland which lay about it by a victory on the very brink of the downs at Barbury Hill.[1]   The ground, however, of which he thus became lord was far from affording any obstacle to further advance ; on the contrary, its very character seemed to draw the Gewissas onward to new aggressions.   The Marlborough Downs are in fact the starting-point from which the second and greatest of its chalk-ranges runs across Southern Britain.   The up-land trends to the north-east under the name of the Ilsley Downs till it reaches a gap through which the Thames strikes southward to its lower river-valley ; then rising again in the Chilterns, it broadens at last into the Gwent in which the East-Anglians had found a home.   In its earlier

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[1] " Byran-byrig," E. Chron. a. 556 ; Guest E. E. Sett. 67 ; Huntingdon, H. A. ed. Arnold, p. 51, gives large details of this battle, but we do not know his authority for them.

course this range naturally called Cynric's men to
a fresh advance ; for from the downs above Marl-
borough the high ground runs on without a break to
the course of the Thames. This tract, however, like
that which they had traversed in the Gwent, must
have been a scantily-peopled one; and its invaders
would turn with eagerness to the more tempting
district which lay in the lower ground on either
side of it. The northern face of the downs consists
of a line of steep cliffs, looking out over a vale
through which the stream of the Ock pours its waters
into the Thames. On the face of this escarpment
the traveller still sees, drawn white against the
scanty turf, the gigantic form of a horse which gives
the Vale of White Horse its name, and which tradi-
tion looks on as a work of the conquering Gewissas.
Another monument of their winning of this district
lingers in the rude stones called Weyland Smith's
House, a cromlech of primæval times where the
Saxons found a dwelling-place for the weird legend
of a hero-smith which they brought with them from
their German homeland.

The White Horse glimmers over a broad and
fertile region, whose local names recall for us the
settlement of the conquerors in hamlets that have
grown into quiet little towns like Wantage, the
future birthplace of Ælfred, or in homesteads that
crowned the low rises or "duns" which overlooked
the valley, such as the dun where the Farrings
planted their Farringdon, or another dun at the
confluence of the Ock and the Thames, where
the West-Saxon Abba chose the site for a dwelling-

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*Conquest
of
Berkshire.*

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place which grew in later days into our Abingdon.
On the south the downs fell in gentler slopes to
the vale of the Kennet, whose silvery stream ran
through masses of woodland, past the ford at Hunger-
ford and the "new burh" of the conquerors which
survives in Newbury, to the low and swampy meadows
where it meets the Thames, as that river bursts from
its cleft through the chalk-range to open out into
its lower valley. In these meadows the house of the
Readings planted a settlement which has grown into
the busy town that preserves their name. Still further
to the east the invaders pushed their way into the
tangled woodland that stretched along the low clay
flats which bordered the southern bank of the Thames,
and where the predominance of the box, or bearroc,
may have given in after days its name of "Bearroc-
shire" or Berkshire to the whole tract of valley
and down which this fresh advance added to the
dominions of the West-Saxons.[1]

*The
Valley of
the
Thames.*
With its conquest the winning of the southern
uplands was complete. And with the winning of these
uplands the whole island lay open to the Gewissas;
for the Andredsweald, which had held back the
invader for half a century, was turned as soon as
the West-Saxons stood masters of the southern
Gwent, and their country now jutted forward like a
huge bastion into the heart of unconquered Britain.
Only on one side were the obstacles in their way
still serious, where the woods of Dorsetshire, with the
thick wedge of forest which blocked the valley of the

[1] For these woodlands see Guest's E. E. Sett. p. 32. The
Kennet valley was not disafforested till the time of Henry III.

Frome beneath the Wiltshire downs, were for long years to hold any western advance at bay. But elsewhere the land was open to their attack. On the north-west easy slopes led to the crest of the Cotswolds, from whence the Severn valley lay before them for their prey. On the north their march would find no natural obstacles as it passed up the Cherwell valley to penetrate either to the central plain of Britain or to the Wash. Above all, to the eastward opened before them the valley of the Thames. From its springs near the crest of the Cotswolds the river falls quietly to the low ground beneath the Marlborough Downs, and then turns abruptly to the south to hew a channel through the line of chalk uplands, and thus part the Berkshire heights from the Chilterns. Once out of this narrow gorge it bends round the woodlands where the advanced guard of Cynric's men were feeling their way into the fastnesses about Windsor, and rolling in a slower and larger current eastward through the wide valley that lies between the North Downs and the East-Anglian heights, after a course of two hundred miles it reaches its estuary and the sea.

No road can have seemed so tempting to the earlier *Its* invaders as this water-road of the Thames, leading *defences.* as it did straight from the Channel to the heart of Britain through an open and fruitful country; and it was by this road that their advance seemed destined to be made when they settled on either side of its estuary in Essex and in Kent. But a century had passed since these settlements, and the Thames valley still remained untouched. Tempting as the

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road seemed, indeed, no inlet into Britain was more effectually barred. On either side the river-mouth, at but little distance from the coast on which East-Saxon and Kentishman were encamped, long belts of woodland and fen stretched to the very brink of the Thames. On the south of it the fastnesses of the Weald found their line of defence prolonged by huge swamps that stretched to the river, and whose memory is still preserved by the local names as by the local floods of Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. To the north as formidable a line of defence presented itself in the tangled forest whose last relics survive in the woods of Epping and in the name of Hainault, and this barrier of woodland was backed by the swamps of the lower Lea to the rear of it. The one line of advance in fact open to an invader was the course of the Thames itself, and the course of the Thames was blocked by the fortress of London.

The site of London.

The commercial greatness of London has made men forget its military importance, but from the first moment of its history till late into the middle ages London was one of the strongest of our fortresses. Its site, indeed, must have been dictated, like that of most early cities, by the advantages which it presented as well for defence as for trade.[1] It stood at the one point by which either merchant or invader could penetrate from the estuary into the valley of the

[1] Rev. W. J. Loftie, "London before the Houses," Macmillan's Magazine, vol. xxxiv. p. 356. To this paper we may add Dr. Guest's remarks on ancient Middlesex in his "Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxiii. p. 159. See too Quarterly Review, July 1880, "Middlesex."

Thames ; and in its earlier days, before the great
changes wrought by the embankment of the Romans,
this was also the first point at which any rising
ground for the site of such a town presented itself
on either shore of the river.   Nowhere has the hand
of man moulded ground into shapes more strangely

EARLY LONDON.
(Local names around of later date.)
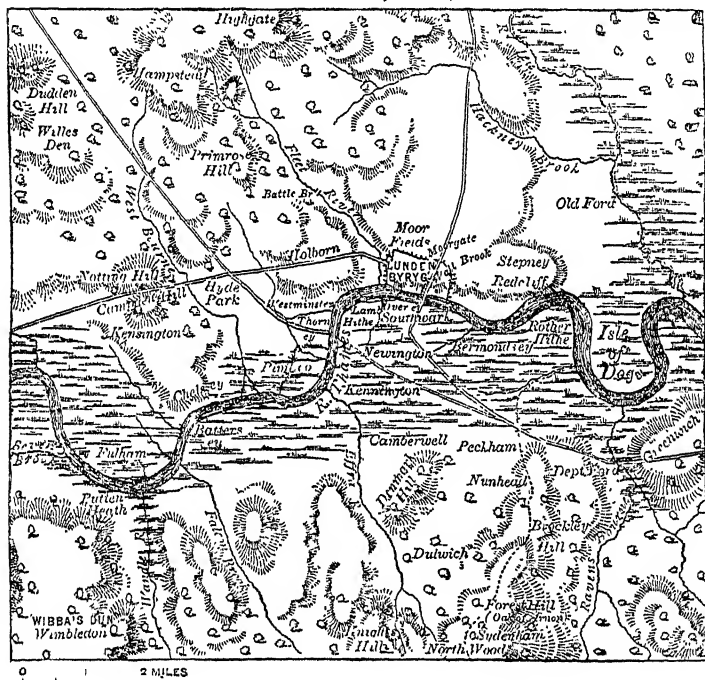
contrasted with its natural form than on the site of
London.   Even as late as the time of Cæsar the soil
which a large part of it covers can have been little
but a vast morass.   Below Fulham the river stretched
at high tide over the ground that lies on either side

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of its present channel from the rises of Kensington and Hyde Park to the opposite shores of Peckham and Camberwell. All Pimlico and Westminster to the north, to the south all Battersea and Lambeth, all Newington and Kennington, all Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, formed a vast lagoon, broken only by little rises which became the "eyes" and "hithes," the "islands" and "landing-rises," of later settlements. Yet lower down to the eastward the swamp widened as the Lea poured its waters into the Thames in an estuary of its own, an estuary which ran far to the north over as wide an expanse of marsh and fen, while at its mouth it stretched its tidal waters over the mud flats which have been turned by embankment into the Isle of Dogs.[1] Near the point where the two rivers meet, a traveller who was mounting the Thames from the sea saw the first dry land to which his bark could steer. The spot was in fact the extremity of a low line of rising ground which was thrown out from the heights of Hampstead that border the river valley to the north, and which passed over the sites of our Hyde Park and Holborn to thrust itself on the east

[1] Guest, "Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journ. xxiii. p. 179. "When the Romans under Aulus Plautius came down the Watling Street to the neighbourhood of London, they saw before them a wide expanse of marsh and mud bank, which twice every day assumed the character of an estuary sufficiently large to excuse, if not to justify, the statement of Dion, that the river there emptied itself into the ocean. No dykes then retained the water within certain limits. One arm of this great wash stretched northward up the valley of the Lea, and the other westward up the valley of the Thames." "The name of London refers directly to the marshes, though I cannot here enter on a philological argument to prove the fact" (p. 180).

into the great morass. This eastern portion of it,
however, was severed from the rest of the rise by the
deep gorge of a stream that fell from the northern
hills, the stream of the Fleet, whose waters, long since
lost in London sewers, ran in earlier days between
steep banks—banks that still leave their impress in
the local levels, and in local names like Snow Hill—to
the Thames at Blackfriars.

The rise or "dun" that stretched from this tidal *Not a*
channel of the Fleet to the spot now marked by the *British Town.*
Tower, and which was destined to become the site
of London, rose at its highest some fifty feet above
the level of the tide, and was broken into two parts
by a ravine through which ran the stream which has
since been known as the Wallbrook. Such a position
was admirably adapted for defence; it was indeed
almost impregnable. Sheltered to east and south by
the lagoons of the Lea and the Thames, guarded to
westward by the deep cleft of the Fleet, it saw
stretching along its northern border the broad fen
whose name has survived in our modern Moorgate.
Nor, as the first point at which merchants could land
from the great river, was the spot less adapted for
trade. But it was long before the trader found
dwelling on its soil. Old as it is, London is far from
being one of the oldest of British cities; till the
coming of the Romans, indeed, the loneliness of its
site seems to have been unbroken by any settlement ·
whatever. The "dun" was in fact the centre of a
vast wilderness. Beyond the marshes to the east lay
the forest track of southern Essex. Across the lagoon
to the south rose the woodlands of Sydenham and

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Forest Hill, themselves but advance guards of the fastnesses of the Weald. To the north the heights of Highgate and Hampstead were crowned with forest-masses, through which the boar and the wild ox wandered without fear of man down to the days of the Plantagenets. Even the open country to the west was but a waste. It seems to have formed the border-land between two British tribes who dwelt in Hertford and in Essex, and its barren clays were given over to solitude by the usages of primæval war.[1]

Roman London.

With the coming of the Roman, however, this solitude passed away.[2] We know nothing of the

[1] Guest, "Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journ. xxiii. p. 167 : "merely a march of the Catuvellauni, a common through which ran a wide trackway, but in which was neither town, village, nor inhabited house. No doubt the Catuvellauni fed their cattle in the march, and there may have been shealings here to shelter their herds-men." " I have little doubt that between Brockley Hill and the Thames all was wilderness from the Lea to the Brent."

[2] Guest ("Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journ. xxiii. p. 180) suggests the Roman origin of London. " When in the autumn of 43 Aulus Plautius drew the lines of circumvallation round his camp, I believe he founded the present metropolis of Britain. The notion entertained by some antiquaries, that a British town preceded the Roman camp, has no foundation to rest upon, and is inconsistent with all we know of the early geography of this part of Britain." Much has been made of its name. but "Llyn-dyn," or whatever the Celtic form may be, is as likely to be the designation of a spot as of a town on it. An almost conclusive proof, however, that no such town existed west of the Fleet may be drawn from the line of the old British road from Kent (the predecessor of the Watling Street), which, instead of crossing the river as in Roman and later times at the point marked by London Bridge, passed, according to Higden, to a point opposite Westminster, and

settlement of the town ; but its advantages as the
first landing-place along the Thames secured for it
at once the command of all trading intercourse with
Gaul, and through Gaul with the Empire at large.[1]
So rapid was its growth that only a few years after
the landing of Claudius London had risen into a
flourishing port, the massacre of whose foreign traders
was the darkest blot on the British rising under
Boadicea.[2] But the town soon recovered from the
blow. If York became the official capital of the
province, London formed its actual centre, for by one
of the many advantages of its site it was necessarily
the point from which the roads of the conquerors
radiated over the island. Such a point would natur-
ally have been found at Richborough, where the line
of communication with the body of the Empire passed
the Channel at its narrowest part. But Kent, as we
have seen, was shut in by barriers which made com-

crossing the river there struck north along the line of Park
Lane and Edgware Road. (Loftie, "Roman London," Archæol.
Journ. vol. xxxiv. p. 165.) Such a course is inconsistent with
the existence of a town on the site of the later London ; in fact,
the rise of such a town is the best explanation of the later
change in the line of this road, which brought about its passage
by the bridge.

[1] As we have seen, vessels from Gaul simply crossed the
Channel to Richborough, and avoided the circuit of the North
Foreland by using the channel of the Wantsum, through which
they passed by Reculver into the Thames.

[2] For "Roman London," we have numerous papers, especially
in the Archæologia, by Mr. Wright, Sir William Tite, Mr.
Taylor, Mr. Black, and Mr. Roach Smith, and a separate
treatise by the last author on "The Antiquities of Roman
London." See too Mr. Loftie's "Roman London" in
Archæological Journal, vol. xxxiv. p. 164.

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munication with the rest of the island impracticable, save at the single spot where the road, thus drawn inland from Richborough, found a practicable passage over the Thames. And this spot was at London. For London was the lowest ground on the tidal waters of the river on which it was possible to build a bridge, and even before a bridge was built it was the lowest ground where passage could be gained by a ferry. But once over the river, the difficulty of divergence was removed, and it was thus that roads struck from London to every quarter of Britain.[1] As the meeting-point of these roads, the point of their contact with the lines of communication between the province and the Empire, as well as the natural port for the bulk of its trade, which then lay exclusively with the Mediterranean and the Channel, London could not fail to grow fast in population and wealth.

Its Growth.

From the traces of burial indeed, which we find over part of the ground, it seems almost certain that the earlier city was far from extending over the whole of the space embraced within the existing Roman walls. It is possible that Londinium at first only occupied the height to the eastward of the Wallbrook, which then ran in a deep channel to its little port at Dowgate, and that its northern bound was marked by a trench whose memory survives in the name of our " Langbourne " Ward ; while the ground to the westward as far as the Fleet was still open and

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[1] Roads such as the Foss Road or the Icknield Way are of earlier than Roman date ; and their direction was determined by very different social and political circumstances from those of Britain in the Roman times. (See Guest, "Aulus Plautius," Arch. Journ. xxiii. p. 175.)

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

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used for interments. But buildings soon rose over the ground outside these narrow bounds. We find traces of villas and pavements stretching over the earlier grave-grounds ; and by the close of the third century at latest, London had spread over the whole area of the rise east of the Fleet between the Thames and the Moor. It was this London that was girt in by the massive walls which were probably raised by Theodosius,[1] when the inroads of the Picts and the descents of the Saxons first made walls necessary for the security of towns in Britain.

But the city spread even beyond these wide bounds. House of citizens studded the country around its walls, and bordered the roads which struck westward along the " hollow bourne " or Holborn, and northward along our Gracechurch Street. Outside the walls too lay a ring of burial-places at Shoreditch and else-where ; while a suburb rose across the river on the site of the present Southwark. One of the most laborious works of the Roman settlers was the em-bankment of the lower channels of the Thames and of the Lea ; and it was on ground thus gained from the morass across the river at our Southwark that

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[1] The ease with which the Frankish soldiers, after the fall of Allectus, fell back on and plundered London suggests that it was then without defence. The reign of Valentinian seems the most probable date for raising walls after this time; and the coins found along its course point to the second half of the fourth century. There are signs too that the wall was raised in some haste, and under the pressure of urgent necessity ; for it is carried over cemeteries and the sites of existing houses, covering even their encaustic pavements in its course ; and fragments of building and sculpture are found worked into it.

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dwellings clustered whose number and wealth leave hardly a doubt that they were already linked by a bridge with the mother city.[1]   Of London itself, however, we know little.   Tradition places a temple of Diana on the spot where the Christian missionaries raised in after time the Church of St. Paul, and here on this higher ground some statelier public buildings may have clustered round it.   But the scarcity of stone and abundance of clay in its neighbourhood were fatal to any architectural pretensions ; and from the character of its remains the town seems to have been little more than a mass of brick houses and red-tiled roofs, pierced with a network of the narrow alleys which passed for streets in the Roman world, and cleft throughout its area by two wider roads from the bridge.   One of these led by a gate near our Bishopsgate to the northern road, the other by a line which is partly represented in our Cannon Street to Newgate and the west.   But if it fell far beneath many of the British towns in its outer seeming, as it fell beneath York in official rank, London surpassed all in population and wealth.   Middlesex possibly represents a district which depended on it in this earlier, as it certainly did in a later time ; and the privileges of the chase, which its citizens enjoyed throughout the middle ages in the woodland that

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[1] "When the foundations of the old bridge were taken up, a line of coins, ranging from the Republican period to Honorius, were found in the bed of the river. . . . . The completeness of the series can only be accounted for on the supposition that a bridge, preceded perhaps by a rope or chain ferry, was very early thrown across the Thames."—Loftie's "Roman London," Archæol. Journ. xxxiv. p. 172.

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_London
and its
invaders._

covered the heights of Hampstead and along the
southern bank of the river as far as the Cray, may
have been drawn from the rights of the Roman
burghers.

In the downfall of the Imperial rule such a town
would doubtless gain a virtual independence ; but
through the darkness of the time we catch only a
passing glimpse of its life, when the Britons, after
their rout at Crayford, fled from the Jutes to find
shelter at "Lundenbyryg."[1] Its power, however, was
seen in the arrest of the invaders as they neared its
southern suburb ; for the western border of Kent
represents, no doubt, fairly enough the point at which
the Londoners were able to hold the "Cant-wara"
at bay on the edge of the morass that stretched
from Southwark to the Dulwich hills. Hardly were
these southern assailants brought to a standstill when
London must have had to struggle against assailants
on the northern bank of the river. Here, however,
the attack was probably a fainter one. Not only was
the line of forest and marsh along the lower channel
of the Lea impenetrable, but the woodland and mud
flats of southern Essex offered little temptation to
the settlers who might have pressed forward in this
quarter. The energies of the East-Saxons were in
fact long drawn elsewhere ; for their settlements lay
mainly in the north of the district to which they gave
their name, where a clearer and more fertile country
offered them homes in the valleys of the Colne and
the Stour ; and even here their numbers must have
been too small to push inland, for half a century

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 457.

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*Fall of
Verulamium.*

seems to have elapsed after their first settlement
before they were strong enough to advance from the
coast into the interior of the island.

When the time came for such an advance, it lay
naturally up the river valleys in which they had
settled; and these led through thinner woodland to
a point in the downs where Saffron Walden still
marks an open "dene" that broke the thickets of the
waste or "Weald." Once on these downs the East-
Saxons found themselves encamped on the central
uplands of the line of chalk heights whose extremi-
ties had already been seized by their brethren in
Berkshire and by the Engle in the Eastern Counties.
Though the tract was traversed by the great road
which ran across Mid-Britain from London to Chester,
the road to which the English gave its later name of
Watling Street, it was a wild and lonely region,
whose woodlands, even in the days of the Norman
kings, made travel through it a dangerous business.[1]
At this time it probably formed the district of
Verulamium, a town which stood near the site of
the present St. Alban's. Verulamium was one of the
oldest towns in Britain; and, in spite of the wild
tract in which it stood, its position on the main road
from London across Mid-Britain gave it a wealth and
importance which are still witnessed by the traces
of an amphitheatre, the extent of its walls, and the
expanse of ruins from which the Abbey and Abbey
Church of later days were mainly constructed. Since
Christianity had become the religion of the Empire

[1] Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv.
p. 114.

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it had won celebrity as the scene of the martyrdom of a Christian soldier, Alban, who was said to have suffered under Diocletian, and whose church was a centre of Christian devotion.[1] But neither its wealth nor its sanctity saved it from the invaders. Its fall was complete; and for centuries to come the broken and charred remains of the town were left in solitude without inhabitants.[2]

Fall of London.

The fall of Verulamium and the settlement of its conquerors in the downs about it must have fallen on London as a presage of ruin. A hundred years had passed away since Hengest's men had fallen back baffled from its neighbourhood; and in the long interval its burghers may have counted themselves safe from attack. But year by year the circle of invasion had been closing round the city. The conquest of Kent had broken its communications with the Continent; and whatever trade might struggle from the southern coast through the Weald had been cut off by the conquest of Sussex. That of the Gwent about Winchester closed the road to the south-west; while the capture of Cunetio interrupted all communication with the valley of the Severn

[1] Gildas, Hist. cap. 10; Bæda, H. E. i. c. 7.

[2] Our only guides to the date of the conquest of Hertfordshire are the date of the earlier conquest of Essex, which as we have seen can hardly have been long before A.D. 500, and that of the fall of Verulamium. That Verulamium had fallen before 560 is shown by the lament over its ruin in Gildas (Hist. sec. 10); but its fall can hardly have been much earlier. The bounds of the diocese of London, which represent the kingdom of Essex, show that the Hertfordshire men were part of the East-Saxons. The present shire of Hertford, however, is far from coinciding in its limits with those of the East-Saxon realm or diocese.

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and the rich country along its estuary. And now the occupation of Hertfordshire cut off the city from northern and central Britain, for it was over these chalk uplands that the Watling Street struck across the central plain to Chester and the north-west, and it was through Verulamium that travellers bent round the forest-block above London on their way to the north. Only along the Thames itself could London maintain any communication with what remained of Britain; and even this communication must have been threatened as the invaders crept down the slopes from the north through the woodland which crowned the rises of Hampstead and Highgate, or descended by the valleys of the Brent and the Colne on the tract which retains their name of Middle-Sexe. The settlers in this district, indeed, seem to have been unimportant; and the walls of the great city were still strong enough to defy any direct attack. But when once the invading force had closed fairly round it, London, like its fellow-towns, must have yielded to the stress of a long blockade. Although no record remains of its capture or surrender,[1] the course of events seems to give the date of its fall pretty clearly. It was certainly in English hands by the opening of the seventh century;[2] and its fall is the one event which would account for a movement of the Kentish-

[1] " Good reasons may be given for the belief that even London itself for a while lay desolate and uninhabited."—Guest, " Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 217.

[2] In 604 it was in the hands of King Sæberct of Essex, "Orientalium Saxonum . . . quorum metropolis Lundonia civitas est," Bæda (H. E. ii. 3). And it passed into those of his sons (ibid. ii. 5).

men which we find taking place, at the moment which
we have reached, along the southern bank of the
Thames.[1]

Since the death of Hengest the kingdom of Kent
had played no direct part in the conquest of Britain.
Jutes had indeed mastered the Isle of Wight, and
Jutish houses had joined the Saxon war-bands in their
winning of southern Britain ; but the Jutish kingdom
itself had rested quietly within its earlier limits be-
tween the Channel and the Thames. Under the great-
grandson of Hengest, however, Æthelberht, who was
born in the year of the fall of Sorbiodunum, and who
mounted its throne as a child a little later, it again
came boldly to the front.[2] Narrow as were its bounds,
indeed, Kent equalled in political power the wider
realms which were forming about it.   It remained, as
of old, one of the wealthiest and most flourishing parts
of Britain.   The ruin of Hengest's wars had been in
some part repaired by the peace which had existed
since its conquest a hundred years ago ; for while
the Gwent and the Thames valley were still being
wasted with fight and ravage, the Cant-wara were
settling quietly down into busy husbandmen along its

[1] The settlers in the district west of London are known after-
wards as the Middle-Saxons. But that they were only an offshoot
of the East-Saxons is clear from the fact that, with London, they
always belonged to the kingdom of Essex, and that Middlesex
still forms a part of the East-Saxon bishopric of London.

[2] The date of Æthelberht's birth is given in the English
Chronicle, a. 552 (in the late Canterbury copy).   Bæda says
that at his death in 616 "regnum. . . . quinquaginta et sex
annis gloriosissime tenuerat" (H. E. ii. 5), which fixes his acces-
sion in 560.   He was thus only eight years old when he became
king, and sixteen when he fought at Wimbledon.

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coast, or on its downs, or in the fertile bottoms of
the river-valleys that cleft them. It was a sign
of this tranquillity that the district had even before
Æthelberht's day resumed that intercourse with the
Continent which the descent of the Jutes had for a
while broken off; and that only a few years later
we find men versed in the English tongue, the result
of a commerce which must have again sprung to life,
ready at hand in the ports of Gaul.[1]

*Kent and
London.*

With wealth and strength drawn from a century of
peace, as well as with the pride which it drew from
the memory of its earlier share in the conquest of
Britain, Kent hardly needed any other stimulus
to nerve it to efforts for a wider sway. But when
Æthelberht looked out from his petty realm with
dreams of sharing in the general advance of his
race, the boy-king found himself shut in on every
side save one by English ground. To the south-
west lay Sussex and the Andredsweald; to the
north over Thames lay the land of the East-Saxons;
and only directly to the west, between the north-
downs and the Thames, did any tract of British
country offer itself to his arms. In this quarter the
Jutes had been baffled for a hundred years by
the barriers in their way, by the wooded fastnesses
of the Dulwich heights, the tangled swamp which
stretched from these heights to the Thames, and
the forces which would pour from London across
its bridge to the suburb that occupied the site of
the future Southwark. From the line of the Med-
way the West-Kentish warriors had crept forward

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

along the strip of shore between Blackheath and the
Thames, past Woolwich and Greenwich, to the edge
of this morass ; but here the border-line of Kent
marks the limit of their advance.   Nothing but the
fall of the great city could remove the hindrance
from their path ; and we can hardly err in believing
that it was the capture of London by the East-Saxons
which at last enabled the Jutes to force their way
across the border, and to march in 568 on the tract
to the west.[1]

But Æthelberht had hardly struggled through the *West-Saxons*
marshes and entered on this long-coveted district than *and Silchester.*
his progress was again roughly barred.   He found
himself face to face, not with a British, but with an
English foe ; for the conquests of the West-Saxons
had brought them, as we have seen, to the western
extremity of the very tract on which Æthelberht
was advancing from the east.   Their overrunning of
Berkshire and the Marlborough Downs had carried
them to the border of the Thames valley, and the
course of the great river led them forward to the
country along its banks.   Only one obstacle lay in
their path.   Of the ring of fortresses that inclosed the
Gwent, Calleva Atrebatum, the modern Silchester,
which stood on the edge of the upland where the
roads from Winchester and Old Sarum united on
their way to London, alone remained in British
hands.   Silchester[2] presented a marked contrast to the
towns which the Gewissas had as yet attacked.   The

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 568.
[2] For Silchester, see paper by Mr. Joyce, Archæol. Journal,
vol. xxx. p. 10.

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fortresses of the Saxon Shore had been built simply as fortresses, and their small walled citadels stood apart from the general mass of habitations near them. In towns such as York, on the other hand, we see the first military settlement of the Roman conquest rising within the earlier walls, but at last so utterly

SOUTH BRITAIN

Roman names=VECTIS, English=SAERO BYRIC, Modern=Chichester
English Miles
0   5   10   20   30

Stanford's Geographical Estab.t
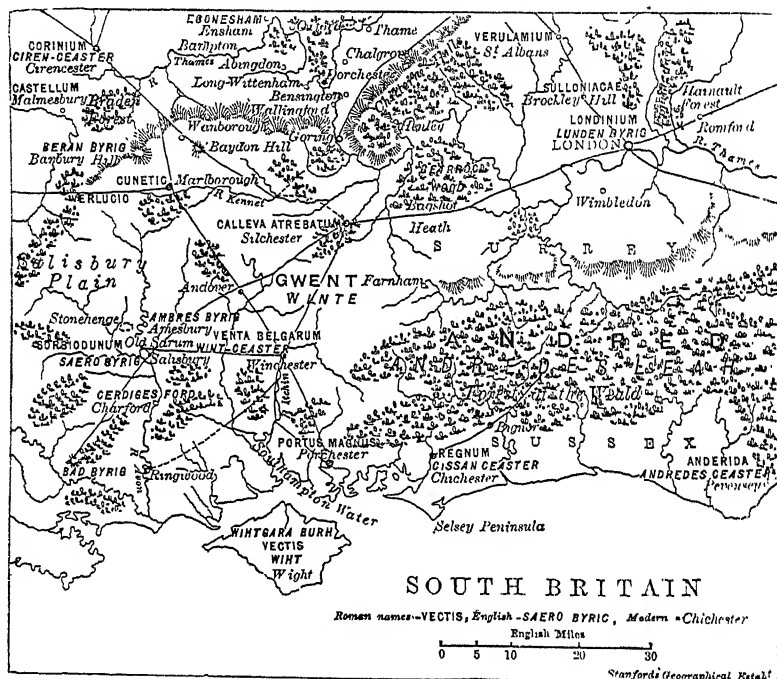
outgrowing them that the bulk of the town lay in undefended suburbs, and the walled city contained little more than the quarters of troops and officials. Silchester belongs to neither of these classes. Originally the seat of a British tribe, its position in the heart of the island had deprived it of any military importance during the earlier ages of the Roman

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occupation, while it sheltered the town from the
border-forays that alone broke the Roman peace.
It was not till the decay of the Empire brought
trouble at last to its gates that inland towns such
as Calleva were compelled to seek shelter in a ring
of walls ; and within these walls the whole town
was naturally inclosed.   It is this cause which
accounts for the disproportion between the walled
area of one town and another in Roman Britain,
between the few acres inclosed by the walls of
York and the space inclosed by the walls of
Silchester or London.   The circuit of the walls of
Silchester is about three miles round ; and their
irregular and polygonal form, if we compare it with
the regular quadrangle of Richborough or Lincoln,
shows that Calleva was a fortified city, and not a city
which had grown up within or around a fortress.
Mutilated and broken down as it is, the wall with
the wide ditch that still partially encircles it enables
us to realize the military strength of the town.   In
the midst of its network of narrow streets lay a
central Forum, round which stood the public offices
and principal shops of the place, while one side was
wholly occupied by a huge basilica, or justice hall,
whose central nave was sustained by two rows of
stately Corinthian pillars, and closed at each end by
a lordly apse.   Remains such as these show that the
Roman tradition was still strong among the citizens
of Calleva, and it may have been with the Roman
eagle at their head, and in the Roman order, that its
men marched against the West-Saxons.   But all was
in vain.   We know nothing of the rout of the

burghers, or of the siege and ruin of their town.
It is only the discovery of a legionary eagle, hidden
away as it would seem in some secret recess, and
there buried for ages beneath the charred wreck
of one of its houses, that tells its own pathetic tale
of the fall of Silchester.[1]

*Battle of
Wimbledon.* The fall of this city opened to the West-Saxons the
road to the west.   By its capture they had in fact
turned the flank of the Andredsweald.   The impene-
trable tract whose scrub and forest and clay bottoms
had so long held the assailants of Southern Britain at
bay lay between the two lines of chalk uplands, the
South Downs and the North Downs, which diverged
from the Gwent on which the West-Saxons had
stood so long.   But the capture of Calleva brought
them fairly round the extremity of the Andredsweald,
and opened for them the tract that lay between
the North Downs and the Thames.   From Silchester
a road led through the heart of this tract to the
south of the Bearrocwood, which filled the bend
of the river about Windsor, traversed the wild
heaths of Bagshot, then as for ages later a lonely
stretch of heather and sand, and dipping into the
marshes that still leave their trace on the scenery
about Weybridge, pushed through the thick wood-
lands which hid the gentle windings of the lower
Mole [2] till it reached the little town which occu-
pied the site of our Kingston.[3]   Here the road

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[1] Joyce, Silchester, Archæol. Journal, xxx. p. 25.

[2] The local names show how thickly this district was wooded.

[3] Numerous remains have been found, which prove that a
Roman station existed at Kingston.

crossed the Thames by a ferry, to strike along its northern bank towards London ; and that the West-Saxons made no attempt to follow its course across the river adds force to the supposition that the city and the district about it were already in English hands.[1] But even in the country between the Thames and the Downs their way was barred by an English rival. Right in their path as they lay at Kingston stretched the low rise of a broad, open heath, which extended from the river's brink at Putney[2] to the height or " dun " which was to be known from some later settler as Wibba's dun, or Wimbledon. The heath was studded with barrows that marked it as the scene of earlier conflicts ; and an older intrenchment which covered seven acres of its surface may have been occupied by the forces under Æthelberht. But a century of peace had left the Jutes no match for veterans who were fresh from the long strife about the Gwent. The encounter of 568 was memorable as the first fight of Englishmen with Englishmen on British soil ;[3] but the day went against the young Kentish King ; his army was thrown back across the Wandle on its own border, and the disputed district, the Surrey of after days, became from that moment a land of the West-Saxons.

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[1] That they had no objection to crossing the river in itself is clear from the fact that they crossed it but a few years later into the territory of the Four Towns. This was British soil : and had our Middlesex been British soil, they would as naturally have crossed at Kingston.

[2] The older form of this name, Putton-heath, tells its own tale.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 568.

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The Four
Towns.

Only one portion of the Thames valley now remained in British hands, the tract along its northern bank from the Chilterns to the Cotswolds ; and it was into the heart of this district that the West-Saxons penetrated as soon as they had mastered Surrey. Close over against their settlements in Berkshire lay a region which was subject to four British towns, now known to us only by their later names of Eynsham, Bensington, Aylesbury, and Lenborough, the last of these a small hamlet near the present Buckingham,[1] The district comprised in fact the valleys of the Thame and the Cherwell, as well as of a few streams yet further to the westward, such as the Woodrush, the Evenlode, and the Lech ; while to northwards it stretched across the bounds of the Thames-basin into the basin of the Wash, and reached in a narrow strip to the Ouse. It lay within a natural framework of river and woodland that marked it off from the rest of Britain. On the eastern side ran the escarpment of the Chilterns, whose chalk downs were covered with scrub and brushwood as well as broken with deep bottoms, which made them for hundreds of years to come almost impenetrable to an army, and which effectually sheltered this tract from any aggression on the part of the Middle-Saxons. To the west, between the district of the Four Towns and the slopes of the Cotswolds, ran a line of woodlands and marshes that have left their traces in Wychwood and Canbury Forest, and in the tangled and difficult channels of the streams which drain them. These lines of defence drew together to the northward,

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 571.

and were linked to the woodlands about Tow-
cester and the marshy meadows of the Ouse, while
along the southern border of the district ran the
Thames, then a deeper and more rapid river than now,
guarded from near the site of the present Oxford
to that of Abingdon by almost impenetrable woods,
and along the bend from Goring to Henley by the
fastness of the Chiltern Hills.

As one looks westward from the Chilterns now-
adays over Aylesbury Vale, the district of the Four
Towns stretches away in undulating reaches of green
meadowland, dotted with hamlets and homesteads
that nestle beneath copses and tree clumps, the clay
bottom of some primæval sea out of which low lifts
of oolite rise at Aylesbury and Brill. Then as now
the country was fertile and well peopled. The river
Thame, which flows through the heart of it, gathers
its waters from the Chiltern slopes, and running
westward, till it passes the little town to which it
gives its name, turns from that point abruptly to
the south by Chalgrove Field to the Thames. On
the upper waters of the stream lay a town which is
represented by our Aylesbury, crowning with the
church, or Eglwys,[1] to which it possibly owed its
English name, a low rise of oolite that commanded the
district from the base of the Chilterns as far as the
town of Thame. A line running close beside Thame
marks the present shire line between Buckingham
and Oxfordshire, as it may then have marked the
boundary between the territory that owned the rule

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[1] Another derivation is from Ægil, the sun-archer of Teutonic mythology.

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of Aylesbury and that which owned the rule of
Bensington. The district of this last town would
thus comprise the lower valley of the Thame, with
the country along the Thames, into which it falls, from
the edge of the Chilterns to its bend northward toward
Oxford, and would cover much the same ground
as the south-eastern portion of the present Oxford-
shire. The western portion of the same county seems
to be coextensive with the district of Eynsham, the
country of the Cherwell valley from Banbury to
Oxford, a district bounded westward by the woods and
marshes of the present Gloucestershire border, parted
from that of Bensington perhaps by the rise of Shot-
over, and touching the districts of Aylesbury and
Buckingham to the east in an irregular line, of which
Brill may have been an outpost. The district of
Lenborough or Buckingham, which lay along the Ouse
to the north of its three confederates, possibly reached
eastward as far as the quiet meadows of Cowper's
Olney and the limits of Bedford, and was bounded
in other directions by the territories of Towcester and
Aylesbury.[1]

[1] I have been guided in tracing these boundaries by the lie of
the ground itself, and what we know of its natural features at
this time, as well as by the limits of the actual shires. But a
more careful examination of the local " dykes," &c., is needed
before one can arrive at more than probable conclusions on the
subject. It is needful too to bear in mind that the shires of
this district probably owe their actual form to administrative
arrangements of the tenth century ; and that though they may
have preserved the boundaries of older tribal divisions, they do
not everywhere exactly coincide with them. Thus, part of the pre-
sent Hertfordshire, as the diocesan limits show, belonged origin-
ally to the district of the Four Towns, and remained West-Saxon

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The
Icknield
Way.

It was from the south that the West-Saxons struck this country of the Four Towns. The conquests of Cynric had planted them, as we have seen, on the Ilsley and Marlborough Downs, in other words on the westernmost portion of the chalk-range that, starting from the Gwent of Hampshire, runs by these downs and the Chilterns to the uplands of East Anglia. Along the base of the slopes in which this range fronts the lower country to the north ran one of the earliest lines of British communication. Its name of the Icknield Way connects this road with the Iceni, whom the Romans found settled in our Norfolk and Suffolk, and points back to days in which this tribe stood supreme in south-eastern Britain, and when the road served as their line of traffic and of military communication with the Gwent of Hampshire and the mining district of Cornwall.[1] Seldom climbing to the crest of the down, and equally avoiding the deep bottoms beneath the slopes of the escarpment, its course recalls a time when the wayfarer shrank equally from the dangers of the open country and from the thickets and marshes which made the lower grounds all but impassable. The road long remained one of the main thoroughfares of the island; pilgrims from the west traversed it throughout the middle ages on their way to the shrine of St. Edmund at Bury; and but two centuries ago lines of pack-horses

till the establishment of the Danelagh. Bedfordshire, again, is made up of more than the district of the "Bedecanford" of Cuthwulf's day.

[1] For the Icknield Way, see Guest, "Four Roman Ways," Archæol. Journ. xiv. 109.

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Battle of
Bedford.

carried along it bales of woollen goods from the manufacturing towns of the eastern counties.

It was along the Icknield Way, therefore, that the West-Saxons would naturally have pushed into the heart of the island. But their advance had been brought to a standstill by a sudden gap in the line of heights, the gap through which the Thames, turning abruptly to the south, cuts its way through the downs to its lower valley and the sea. It was this obstacle of the great river which had bent them to their march along its southern bank and their conquest of Surrey. But Surrey once won, their advance along the line of the chalk-downs was resumed; and the barrier of the river was forced at a spot whose name preserves for us the memory of the invaders. Just before the Thames enters the gap beneath the Chilterns, the Icknield Way crossed it by a ford, which was recognized for a thousand years as the main pass across the river. Here probably the Romans first crossed into Mid-Britain, and it was by the same point that the Norman conqueror made his way after Hastings into the heart of the island. With the single exception indeed of Halliford, near the Coway Stakes, this was the lowest point in its course in which the Thames under its then tidal conditions could be forded at all.[1] It was by this ford, the Wallingford or Ford of the Wealhas[2] or Welsh-men,

[1] Guest, "Campaign of Aulus Plautius," Archæol. Journal, xxiii. pp. 163, 165, 175.

[2] It was by this name, which means "strangers," or "unintelligible people," that the English knew the Britons; and it is the name by which the Britons, oddly enough, now know themselves.

as the conquerors called it, that the West Sexe must
have passed the river in 571.[1] Their leader was
Cuthwulf, another son of Cynric, a brother of Ceawlin
and Cutha, eager, it may be, to rival the achievements
of his father and brother in war. Of the events of
this campaign, however, we know but one, the battle
with which it closed. From the spot at which it was
fought it seems as if Cuthwulf's raid had carried him
from Wallingford by the Icknield Way along the
western slope of the Chilterns as far as Bedford before
the forces of the Four Towns could gather at the news
of the foray, intercept him as he fell back from the
valley of the Ouse, and force him to an engagement.[2]

But whatever were the circumstances which brought
about the battle, victory fell as of old to the
freebooters, and the success of Cuthwulf's men
was followed by the ruin of the Four Towns of
the league.

The last raid of the West-Saxons had brought them
to the verge of Mid-Britain. That they paused at
this point in their advance to the north, and that the
upper Ouse at Bedford remained the boundary of
their conquests in this quarter, may probably be ex-
plained, like their previous turning away from London,
by the fact that the country which they had reached
was already in the hands of Englishmen. No written
record indeed fixes the dates of the winning of central
Britain ; but the halt of Cuthwulf is a significant one.

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of the
Saxons.

c. 500
577.

*Halt of
West-
Saxons.*

[1] " The name of the earlier conquerors still lives in the
neighbouring Englefield."—Freeman, " Norman Conquest," iii.
p. 542.

[2] E. Chron. 571 ; Guest, E. E. Sett. p. 71.

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In the years that followed the victory of 571 the West-Saxons must have spread over the country they had won, over an area which roughly corresponds to that of the shires of Oxford, Bedford, and Bucks. To the eastward, therefore, their settlements were pushed along the clay-flats of the upper Ouse, along

the valley which lies between the chalk-ranges of the Chilterns and the oolitic upland of our Northampton-shire. On the Chilterns, as we know, the East-Saxons had for some while been settled about Hertford ; but that the West-Sexe made no effort to push further to the east can only be explained by the

presence of other Englishmen in that quarter. No

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natural obstacles arrested their march along the Ouse ;
neither forest nor hill forced them to halt at the point
in its course which is marked by the little town of
St. Neots, or to draw their border line from it along
such lines as the little stream of the Kym.[1] We can
only account for such a halt by supposing that, across
this border line on the course of the lower Ouse,
the ground which now forms our Huntingdonshire
had been occupied before 571 by the Engle folk
whom we find in later days settled there.

That the Engle were at the same time masters of
the upland which stretched like a bar across Cuth-
wulf's road to the north is less certain ; for in this
quarter, as we have seen, the dense screen of forests
along the southern slopes of Northamptonshire might
of themselves have held the West-Saxons at bay.
But the conquest of the Trent valley must now have
been going on ; and the presence of Englishmen on
the northern upland is the best explanation of the
sudden wheel which the West-Saxons now made to
the west. Directly westward, indeed, they were still
not as yet to press ; for the woods of Dorsetshire
baffled them, and those of the Frome valley long
proved a protection to the Britons of Somerset. Nor,
for reasons we are less able to discover, did they push
up the oolitic slopes from our Oxfordshire to the
brow of the Cotswolds, where the town of Corinium

*Attack on
Severn
Valley.*

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[1] I do not rely wholly on the fact of the present shire line ;
for here language serves as a more definite boundary. Bedford-
shire men still speak a Saxon, Huntingdon and Northampton-
shire folk speak an Engle, dialect.

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challenged their arms. It may have been that the
tangled streams, the woodlands, and the pass over the
Thames at Lechlade, which protected this district,
were still held too strongly by the forces of the city.
But on their north-western border, in the interval

WEST BRITAIN

Roman names   CORINIUM
English   CIREN-CEASTER
Modern   Cirencester

English Miles

0 5 10   20   30   40

Stanfords Geographical Establ.t

between these lines of attack, lay a third line which
was guarded by no such barriers, the line of the lower
Severn valley, and it was on this tract that the West-

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Sexe poured from the Wiltshire downs in 577.[1] The country was richer than any they had as yet traversed. Nowhere do the remains of both private and public buildings show greater wealth and refinement than at Corinium, the chief town of the Cotswolds, which stood on the site of our Cirencester, and which was surpassed in wealth and importance among its fellow towns only by York, London, and Colchester.[2] Below the Cotswolds, in the valley of the Severn, Glevum, the predecessor of our Gloucester, though smaller in size, was equally important from its position at the head of the estuary, and from its neighbourhood to the iron works of the Forest of Dean. Less than these in extent, but conspicuous from the grandeur of its public buildings, Bath was then, as in later times, the fashionable resort of the gouty provincial. Its hot springs were covered by a colonnade which lasted down to almost recent times ; and its local deity, Sul, may still have found worshippers in the lordly temple whose fragments are found among its ruins.[3] The territory of the three towns shows their power, for it comprised the whole district of the Cotswolds and the lower Severn, with a large part of

[1] As to this inroad I follow in the main Dr. Guest's paper, "On the English Conquest of the Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. 195.

[2] Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 195. For Corinium, see paper by Mr. Tucker, Archæol. Journ. vi. 321. The modern Cirencester "does not occupy more than one-third of the area of the Roman city."

[3] The Roman remains at Bath have been described by Mr. Scarth in numerous papers, some of which may be found in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archæological Society.

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what is now northern Somersetshire. It stretched therefore from Mendip on the south as far northwards as the forest which then covered almost the whole of Worcestershire. This fertile district was thickly set with the country houses and estates of the wealthier provincials. On either side of a road that runs through the heart of it, from Cirencester to Aust-passage over the Severn, as well as along the roads which linked the three cities together, these mansions stood thickly ; and that of Woodchester is perhaps the largest and most magnificent whose remains have as yet been found in Britain.[1] Two courts, round which ran the farm buildings and domestic buildings of the house, covered an area five hundred feet deep and three hundred broad. Every colonnade and passage had its tesselated pavement ; marble statues stood out from the gaily painted walls ; while pictures of Orpheus and Pan gleamed from amid the fanciful scrollwork and fretwork of its mosaic floors.

Battle of Deorham.

It was from houses such as these, and from the three cities to which they clung, that the army gathered which met the West-Saxons under Ceawlin as they pushed over the Cotswolds into the valley of the Severn. But the old municipal independence seems to have been passing away. The record of the battle in the chronicle of the conquerors connects the three cities with three kings ; and from the Celtic names of these kings, Conmael, Condidan or Kyndylan, and Farinmael, we may infer that the Roman town party, which had once been strong enough to raise Aurelius to the throne of Britain, was now

[1] Wright, " Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 229–240.

driven to bow to the supremacy of native chieftains.[1]

It was the forces of these kings that met Ceawlin at Deorham, a village which lies northward of Bath on a chain of hills overlooking the Severn valley, and whose defeat threw open the country of the three towns to the West-Saxon arms. Through the three years that followed the invaders must have been spreading over the district which this victory made their own. Westward, if Welsh legend is to be trusted, their forays reached across the Severn as far as the Wye.[2] To the south they seem to have pushed across the Avon past the site of the future Bristol, and over the limestone mass of Mendip, whence they drove off in flight the lead-miners who have left their cinder-heaps along its crest, till they were checked in their progress by the marshes of Glastonbury.[3] In the south-west they were unable to dislodge the Britons from the forest of Braden, the woodland that filled the Frome valley; and this wedge of unconquered ground ran up for the next hundred years into the heart of their territory. But in the rich tract along the lower Severn which the site of their victory overlooked their settlements lay thick. Here, in the present Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, the settlers bore the name of the Hwiccas,[4] a name which

[1] E. Chron. a. 577. Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 194.

[2] Guest, "Conq. of Severn Valley," Archæol. Journ. xix. p. 195.

[3] Guest, "Welsh and Engl. in Somerset," Archæol. Journ. xvi. pp. 109–117.

[4] Theodore set the "bishop of the Hwiccas" at Worcester; and his diocese included both the counties of Worcester and Gloucester as well as the adjacent districts. This seems to

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took a yet wider range as from the valley of the
Severn the invaders spread over the upland of the
Cotswolds to settle round the fallen Corinium, and
found homes along the southern skirts of the forest
of Arden.

prove that " Hwiccan " was the older name for the settlers
along the whole of the lower Severn, the Cotswolds above
it, and southern Warwickshire ; and Florence (a. 897) places
Cirencester "in meridionali parte Wicciorum"—which would con-
firm this.　Earle, "Local Names of Gloucestershire" [Archæol.
Journ. xix. pp. 51, 52], connects the name with our Wychwood,
spelt in 841 " Hwicce-wudu," and which, though in Oxfordshire,
is within a short distance of Gloucestershire, and marks the
watershed between Severn and Thames.　He seems, however, to
limit the Hwiccas to Gloucestershire : and to give Worcestershire
to the Magesætas, whom Mr. Freeman places in Herefordshire
and Shropshire [Norm. Conquest, i. p. 561].

SOUTH WESTERN BRITAIN

Roman names　　GLEAVUM
English　　,,　　DEORHAM
Modern　　,,　　Amesbury

English Miles.
0 5 10　　20　　30　　40

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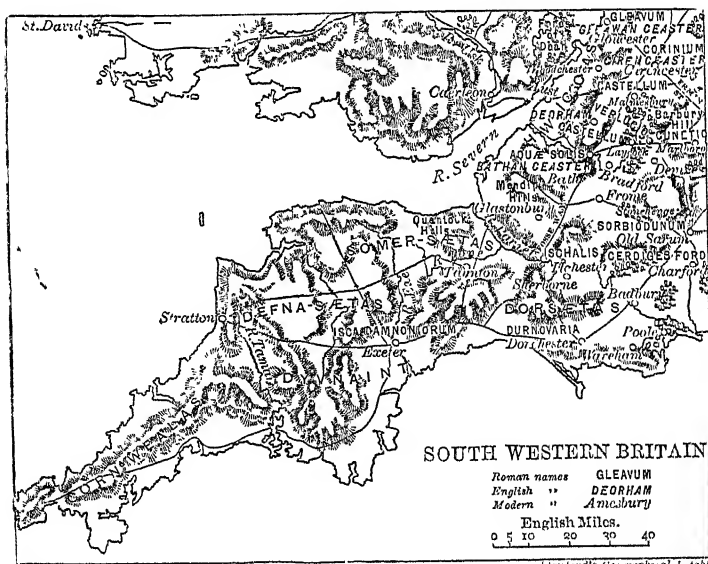
CHAPTER IV.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CONQUERORS.

WITH the battle of Deorham and the winning of the lower Severn valley we enter on a new age of our history. The conquest indeed was far from being complete, for when Ceawlin paused in his career of victory half the island still remained unconquered, and the border line of the invaders ran roughly along the rise that parts the waters of Britain, from Ettrick across Cheviot, along the Yorkshire moors to the Peak of Derbyshire, thence by the skirts of Arden to the mouth of Severn, and across the estuary of that river, by Mendip, through the woods of Dorset to the sea. But the country within this line comprised all that was really worth winning, for the wild land to westward and northward had little to tempt an invader. Though the tide of invasion therefore still crept on, it crept on slowly and uncertainly ; and from this time the energies of the conquerors were mainly absorbed, not in winning fresh land, but in settling in the land they had won. We pass, then, from an age of Conquest to an age of Settlement. But dim as was the light that guided us through much of our earlier story, it is bright beside the darkness that

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wraps the first upgrowth of English life on British soil. No written record tells us how Saxon or Engle dealt with the land they had made their own, how they drove out its older inhabitants, or how they shared it among the new, how the settlers settled down in township or thorpe, or how they moulded into shape, under changed conditions, the life they had brought with them from German shores. Even legend and tradition are silent as to their settlement. It is only by help of the few traces of this older life which remains embedded in custom, or in law, or in later verse, that we can sketch its outlines, and such a sketch must necessarily be dim and incomplete.

Weakness of English attack.

The character of the settlement was in great measure determined by that of the conquest itself; as that of the conquest was determined by the main characteristics which distinguished the winning of Britain from the winning of the other western provinces of the Empire. The first of these was the comparative weakness of the attack. Nowhere had the barbaric force been so small or its onset so fitful. Difficulties of transport made attack by sea less easy than attack by land; and the warriors who were brought across the Channel or the German Ocean by the boats of Hengest and Cerdic must have been few beside the hosts who followed Alboin or Chlodowig over the Alps or the Rhine. The story of the conquest confirms the English tradition that the invaders of Britain landed in small parties, and that they were only gradually reinforced by after-comers. Nor was there any joint action among the

assailants to compensate for the smallness of their numbers.[1] Though all spoke the same language and used the same laws, they had no such bond of political union as the Franks ; and though all were bent on winning the same land, each band and each leader preferred their own separate course of action to any collective enterprise.

A second, and yet more momentous characteristic, was the stubbornness of the defence. It is this indeed which above all distinguished the conquest of Britain from that of other provinces of Rome. In all the world-wide struggles between Rome and the Germanic races, no land was so stubbornly fought for or so hardly won. In Gaul the Frank or the Visigoth met little native resistance save from the peasants of Brittany or Auvergne. No popular revolt broke out against the rule of Odoacer or Theodoric in Italy. But in Britain the invader was met by a courage and tenacity almost equal to his own. So far as we can follow the meagre record of the conquerors, or track their advance by the dykes and ruins it left behind it, every inch of ground seems to have been fought for. Field by field, town by town, forest by forest, the land was won ; and as each bit of ground was torn away from its defenders the beaten men sullenly drew back from it to fight as stubbornly for the next.

But there was yet a third characteristic of the conquest which told on the after settlement, and this was the way in which the struggle was influenced by the nature of the conquered country itself. It is

[1] Stubbs, Constit. Hist., i. 67.

impossible to follow the story of its winning without being struck by the natural obstacles which the province presented to an invader. Elsewhere in the Roman world the work of the conqueror was aided by the very civilization of Rome. Vandal and Goth marched along Roman highways, over ground cleared by the Roman axe, as they crossed river or ravine on the Roman bridge. To a great extent it was so in Britain. But though Britain had been Romanized, she had been less Romanized than any province of the West ; and the material civilization of the island was yet more backward than its social civilization. The mere forest-belts which remained over vast stretches of country formed mighty barriers, barriers which were everywhere strong enough to check the advance of an invader, and sometimes strong enough to arrest it. The Jutes and the South-Saxons were brought wholly to a standstill by the Andredsweald. The East-Saxons never pierced the woods of their western border. The Fens proved impassable to the East-Angles. It was only after a long and terrible struggle that the West-Saxons could hew their way through the forests that girt in the Gwent of the southern coast, and in the height of their power they were thrown back from the forests of Cheshire.

The Britons driven off. Under such conditions the overrunning of Britain could not fail to be a very different matter from the rapid and easy overrunning of such countries as Gaul. Instead of quartering themselves quietly, like their fellows abroad, on subjects who were glad to buy peace by obedience and tribute, Engle and Saxon had to make every inch of Britain their own by hard fighting.

Instead of mastering the country in a few great battles, they had to tear it bit by bit from its defenders in a weary and endless strife. How slow the work of English conquest was may be seen from the fact that it took nearly thirty years to win Kent alone, and sixty to complete the conquest of Southern Britain, while the conquest of the bulk of the island was only wrought out after two centuries of bitter warfare. But it was just through the length of the struggle, that, of all the German conquests, this was the most thorough and complete. That of France by the Franks, or that of Italy by the Lombards, proved little more than a forcible settlement of the one or the other among tributary subjects who were destined in a long course of ages to absorb their conquerors. French is the tongue, not of the Frank, but of the Gaul whom he overcame; and the fair hair of the Lombard is all but unknown in Lombardy. But almost to the close of the sixth century the English conquest of Britain was a sheer dispossession of the conquered people; and, so far as the English sword in these earlier days reached, Britain became England,[1] a land, that is, not of Britons, but of Englishmen.

There is no need to believe that the clearing of the land meant the general slaughter of the men who held it, or to account for such a slaughter by supposed differences between the temper of the English and those of other conquerors. Fierce and cruel as they may have been, the picture which Gregory of Tours gives us of the Franks hinders us from believing that

*Not
slaughtered.*

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[1] I use the word only by anticipation. The name " England" itself is not found before the days of Eadgar and Dunstan.

Englishmen were more fierce or cruel than other Germans who attacked the Empire. Nor is there more ground for the assertion[1] that they were utterly strange to the Roman civilization ; indeed the mere presence of Saxon vessels in the Channel for a hundred years before their descent upon Britain must have familiarized its invaders with what civilization was to be found in the provinces of the West. It was not the temper of the conquerors that gave its character to the conquest of Britain so much as the temper of the conquered. The displacement of the conquered people was only made possible by their own stubborn resistance, and by the slow progress of the conquerors in the teeth of it. Slaughter no doubt there was on the battle-field or in towns like Anderida, whose long defence woke wrath in their besiegers. But for the most part the Britons cannot have been slaughtered ; they were simply defeated and drew back.

The proofs of such a displacement lie less in isolated passages from chronicle or history than in the broad features of the conquest itself.[2] When Hengest landed in Thanet he found Britain inhabited by a people of Celtic and Roman blood, a people governed by Celtic or Roman laws, speaking the Welsh or Latin tongue; still sharing to a great extent the civilization and manners of the Empire from which they had parted, and at least outwardly conforming to the Christian faith which that Empire professed. The outer aspect of the land remained that of a Roman

[1] Freeman, " Norman Conquest," vol. i. p. 20.
[2] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. i. 70.

province ; it was guarded by border fortresses ; it
was studded with peopled cities ; it was tilled by
great landowners whose villas rose proudly over the
huts of their serfs.   But when Ceawlin turned from
the battle-field of Deorham, the face of the Britain
that lay behind him was utterly changed.   So far as
the English or Saxon sword had reached, to the east-
ward, that is, of the line which we have drawn
through Central Britain, the country showed no sign
of British or Roman life at all.   The tradition both
of conquerors and of conquered tells us that an utter
change had taken place in the men that dwelt in it.
They knew themselves only as Englishmen, and in
the history or law of these English inhabitants we
find as yet not a trace of the existence of a single
Briton among them.[1]   The only people that English
chronicle or code knows of as living on the conquered
soil are Englishmen.   Nor does the British tradition
know of any other.   Had Britons formed part of the
population in the land which had been reft away by
the invader's sword, they must have been known to
their fellow Britons beyond the English border.   But
in the one record of such a Britain that remains to us,
the history of Gildas, there is 'no hint of their exist-
ence.[2]   To him, as to his fellow-countrymen, the land

[1] From the close of the sixth century, when the conquest took
wider bounds and a new character, we find a different state of
things in the newly annexed districts.   Here I am speaking
strictly of the earlier age of conquest and of the portion of
Britain which it covered.

[2] There is, indeed, a single phrase (Hist. c. 25, "alii fame
confecti accedentes, manus hostibus dabant in ævum servituri "),
which speaks of the surrender of Britons to their conquerors,

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*Evidence
of names.*

of the Englishmen is a foreign land and its people a foreign people.

The contemporary tradition, then, is everywhere the same ; and it is confirmed by every fact which meets us in the path of our story.   Had the older inhabitants remained as serfs or as a dependent people among their conquerors, as the older inhabitants of Gaul remained among the Franks, or those of Italy among the Lombards, we should find a state of things in some degree like to that of Italy or Gaul.   We should find at any rate some traces of the provincials in the history of the joint population, some traces of their cities and their country-houses, some of their names mingling with those of the new-comers, some remains of their language, their religion, their manners, and their law.   But in conquered Britain we find not a trace of these things. The designations of the local features of the country indeed, the names of hill and vale and river, often remain purely Celtic.   There are " pens " and " duns " among our uplands, " combes " in our valleys, " exes " and " ocks " among our running waters.   But when we look at the traces of human life itself, at the names of the villages and hamlets that lie scattered over the country side, we find them purely English. The " vill " and the " city " have vanished, and in their stead appear the " tun " and " ham " and " thorpe " of the new settlers.   If we turn from the names of these villages to those of the men who live

but such captives would at such a time be sold into slavery, and the mention of them only makes the silence of Gildas elsewhere the more significant.

in them the contrast becomes even stronger. So far CHAP IV.
as existing documents tell us anything, they tell us
that Roman and Welshman wholly vanished from
the land. When Gregory of Tours writes the story of
Gaul after its conquest by the Franks, we meet in the
course of his narrative with as many Roman names
as Frank. But in the parallel history of Britain after
its conquest by the English which we owe to Bæda,
we meet with no British or Roman names at all. He
gives us indeed the names of Britons in districts
which still remained free from English rule ; but
amidst the hundreds of men and women whom he
records as living and acting in the new England,
there is not one whose name is not almost certainly
English.[1]

<div style="float:right;text-align:right">The
Settlement
of the
Conquerors.</div>

It is the same with language. Latin, which had
been the official tongue of the province, the lan-
guage of its soldiers and civil administrators, and
probably that of its citizens, withdrew before the
invader to the south-west and the west. When it
again appeared in eastern Britain, it came as a
foreign tongue brought in by foreign missionaries,
and needing interpreters to explain it to the men it
found there.[2] The British tongue, the tongue, that is,
of the mass of the population even under Roman rule,
though it lived on as the tongue of the Britons them-
selves in the land to which they withdrew, has left
hardly a trace of its existence in the language which

<div style="float:right;text-align:right">Evidence
of
language.</div>

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[1] I do not know of any that have even been claimed as British
save Coifi and the West-Saxon Ceadwalla.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 23, 25. Bæda, Vit. Abbatum, ed.
Stevenson, p. 141.

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has taken its place over the conquered area.[1] There is
the same utter change in government, in society, in
law. The Roman law simply disappeared ;[2] and no
trace of the body of Celtic customs which form the
Welsh law can be detected in the purely Teutonic
institutes which formed the law of the English settlers.
The political institutions that we find established in
the conquered land, as well as the social usages of the
conquering people, are utterly different from those of
the Roman or the Celt ; not only are they those which
are common to the German race, but they are the
most purely German institutions that any branch of
the German race has preserved.[3]

[1] The Celtic words in our earlier English were first col-
lected by Mr. Garnett in his " Philological Essays." They
are few, and mostly words of domestic use, such as *basket*,
which may well have crept in from the female slaves who must
here and there have been seized by the invaders. It must be
remembered, too, that we have no means of ascertaining *when*
such words became English ; and that after the change in the
character of the conquest, that is from the seventh century,
Welsh words like Welsh names would naturally filter in from
the mixed population of western and south-western Britain.

[2] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. vol. i. p. 11.

[3] Stubbs, Constit. Hist. vol. i. p. 6. " If its history is not
the perfectly pure development of Germanic principles, it is the
nearest existing approach to such a development." . . . Again,
at p. 11, " The polity developed by the German races on British
soil is the purest product of their primitive instinct . . . The
institutions of the Saxons of Germany long after the conquest of
Britain were the most perfect exponent of the system which
Tacitus saw, and described in the Germania ; and the polity of
their kinsmen in England, though it may not be older in its
monuments than the Lex Salica, is more entirely free from
Roman influences. In England the common germs were de-
veloped and ripened with the smallest intermixture of foreign

Had any fragment of the older provincial life
survived, the analogy of other provinces shows that
it would have been that municipal organization which
elsewhere handed down the tradition of the Empire.
In the Roman world political and social life had been
concentrated in its towns ; and we have seen how
great a part they played in the times which fol-
lowed the withdrawal of the Roman rule.   But with
the English conquest the towns disappear. Though the
Englishmen like other Germans shrank from dwelling
within city walls, a native population, had it survived
here as it survived elsewhere, would have remained,
subject indeed but unchanged, in its older homes.
But as the conquest passed over them, the towns of
Roman Britain sank into mere ruins.   Some never
rose from their ruins.   Anderida remained a wreck of
uninhabited stones in the twelfth century,[1] and its
square of walls remains lonely and uninhabited still.
Silchester and Uriconium, large as they were, have
only been brought to light again by modern research.
The very sites of many still remain undiscovered.
Such a permanent extinction however was seldom
possible, for the local advantages which had drawn
population to hill or river-ford in Celtic or Roman
times began again to tell as the new England itself

elements.   Not only were all the successive invasions of Britain
which from the eighth to the eleventh century diversify the
history of the island conducted by nations of common extraction,
but, with the exception of ecclesiastical influence, no foreign
interference that was not German in origin was admitted at all.
Language, law, customs, and religion, preserve their original
conformation and colouring."

[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (ed. Arnold), p. 45.

grew populous and industrial ; and the sites of these older cities became necessarily the sites of the new. But their repeopling was only after centuries of desolation and neglect. We have no ground for believing that Winchester had risen on the site of the Belgic Gwenta before the middle of the seventh century.[1] Cambridge was still a heap of ruins in the eighth century,[2] though it had risen to fresh life in the tenth. The great military station of Deva was still the " waste Chester " that Ælthelfrith left it, when Ælthelflæd four hundred years after made it her Chester on the Dee.[3] And even when life returned to them, it was long before the new towns could again cover the whole area of their ruined predecessors. It was not till Cnut's time that York could cover the area of Eburacum. It was not till after Dunstan's day that Canterbury grew big enough to fill again the walls of Durovernum. It was not till the very eve of the conquest that London itself stretched its dwellings over the space which lay within the walls of Londinium.[4] The new towns, too, grew up as new towns. Of the life or municipal government of their Roman predecessors they knew nothing. They inherited no curials or decurions. Their municipal constitution,

[1] The local traditions place the hallowing of the new church there in 648. See Rudborne, Hist. Major, and Annales Ecc. Wint. (Anglia Sacra, i. 189, 288).

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19.

[3] Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), " Civitatem Legionum, tunc temporis desertam." Eng. Chron. a. 894. " Anre wæstre castre."

[4] At all these three towns the parishes furthest from the new starting-point within the walls are, as the dedications of their churches show, of these dates.

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of religion.*

like their social organization, was of a purely English type.[1]

The faith of Britain perished as utterly. Nothing brings home to us so vividly the change which had passed over the conquered country as the entire disappearance of its older religion. Had the conquest of Britain been in any way like the conquest of Italy or of Gaul, its religious issue could hardly have been other than theirs. Had the Britons been left existing on the soil as a subject population, paying tribute to or tilling the lands of foreign lords, the change of faith would most probably have been a change in the religion of the conquerors, and not of the conquered. To judge from the stubbornness with which the Romanized peoples rejected heathendom, and from the facility with which the Teutonic races elsewhere yielded to the spell of Christianity, it was not the Britons who would have become worshippers of Woden, but Engle and Saxon who would have become worshippers of Christ. But even if we suppose the invaders to have retained their old religion, the religious aspect of the land as a whole would have been little altered. In no instance did the Teutonic conquerors wage a religious war on the faiths of the conquered people. To barbarous races, indeed, who look on religion as simply a part of the national life, proselytism or persecution is impossible. The heathendom of the invaders would have been confined to their own settlements, and the whole British population would have remained Christian as before. Its churches, its priesthood, its ecclesiastical organization, its dioceses

[1] Stubbs, Constit. Hist., vol. i. p. 105 and note.

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The
Settlement
of the
Conquerors.

and provinces, its connection with the rest of the
Western Church, would have gone on without
material change.

But what we find is the very reverse of this.
In the conquered part of Britain Christianity wholly
disappeared. The Church, and the whole organiza-
tion of the Church, vanished. The few religious
buildings of whose existence we catch a glimpse
survived only as deserted ruins. So far was
any connection with Western Christianity from ex-
isting, that all the rest of the Christian world,
whether of the Celtic or Roman obedience, lost
sight of the conquered part of Britain altogether.
When Rome long afterwards sought to renew
its contact with it, it was as with a heathen
country;[1] and it was in the same way as a heathen
country that it was regarded by the Christians of
Ireland and by the Christians of Wales. When
missionaries at last made their way into its bounds,
there is no record of their having found a single
Christian in the whole country. What they found
was a purely heathen land; a land where homestead
and boundary and the very days of the week bore
the names of new gods who had displaced Christ, and
where the inhabitants were so strange to the faith they
brought that they looked at its worship as magic.[2] It
is hardly possible to conceive a stronger proof that

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 23. The first Roman missionaries
thought of returning home rather than of encountering these
heathen; "redire domum potius, quam barbaram, feram, in-
credulamque gentem, cujus ne linguam quidem nossent, adire
cogitabant."

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 25.

the conquest of Britain had been a real displacement
of the British people; for if Wodenism so utterly
supplanted Christianity, it can only have been because
the worshippers of Woden had driven off from the
soil the worshippers of Christ.

Complete, however, as was the wreck of Roman life,
complete as was the displacement up to this point of the
older British population, the past history of the island
was not without its influence on the new settlers. Its
physical structure to a great extent dictated the lines
of their advance, the extent of their conquest, and
their political distribution over the conquered soil, as
it had dictated the conquest and settlement of the
races that had preceded them. The province indeed
gave its bounds to the new England. It was not the
island of Britain which Engle and Saxon had mastered,
it was the portion of it which lay within the bounds
of the Roman Empire. Even in its widest advance,
English life stopped abruptly at the Friths of Forth
and of Clyde, as Roman life had stopped there before
it; while it penetrated but slowly and imperfectly into
the western and north-western districts of Britain,
as Rome had penetrated but slowly and imperfectly
into them. The mountains and moors which had
checked the progress of the one invader checked the
progress of the other. But even within the limits of
conquered Britain, its physical features often shaped
the settlement of the conquerors. The story of the
conquest, as we have striven to follow it, has shown
us how great an influence the very ground exerted
on the direction and the fortunes of every English
campaign. In the bulk of cases its character deter-

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mined the bounds, and with the bounds the after-destinies of the various peoples that parted the land between them. The Andredsweald with its outliers prisoned the Jutes within the limits of the Caint, and turned them into Cant-wara, or Kentish men. It dwarfed into political insignificance the Surrey-folk and the South-Saxons, whom it pressed between its northern edge and the Thames, or between its southern edge and the sea. The insular character of the Gwent upon the eastern coast forced the bands of invaders that landed there into political union as the people of the East-Angles. In the same way the long range of moorland and fen and sea-coast, which formed the framework of Yorkshire, and so long preserved the individuality of this portion of the island, furnished the Deirans with their natural boundaries, and made them, from the mere space they inclosed, one of the greater peoples of Britain.[1] The West-Saxons profited even more from the character of the ground which they traversed. Touching originally at the one point in the southern coast where access to the province was easy, they found their first settlements moulded by the bounds and divisions of the southern downs, while from their slopes to east-

[1] It is, however, remarkable that in the case of Yorkshire the incidents of the conquest modified the political boundaries of both Celtic and Roman times. In both, the territory on the western and eastern coast belonged to the same district, and the moorlands which part our Yorkshire from our Lancashire formed no boundary line. In the earlier days of the English conquest it seemed as if this arrangement would be preserved; and only a complicated set of transactions in later times made Yorkshire the separate district which it is.

ward and westward lay open before them the valleys
of the Severn and the Thames. The territory of
Ceawlin, with all the long series of events which
widened the realm of the West-Saxons into the
kingdom of England, were but the necessary issues
of the physical circumstances which brought about
their first landing and settlement in Britain.

Nor was the political structure of the province
without as distinct an influence on the settlement of
the invaders. The towns with their subject districts
often gave shape and bounds to the states which their
conquerors founded about their ruins. The districts
of Camulodunum Verulamium, and Londinium, made
up the kingdom of the East-Saxons. The territory
which the West-Saxons acquired after the battle of
Bedford to the north of the Thames consisted of
the districts of four cities, whose early names are
forgotten. Those of Bath, Gloucester, and Cirencester,
formed the territory of the Hwiccas. That of Ratæ
or Leicester formed in all probability the territory
of the Middle-English. And what was true of the
political life of Britain was true also of its social
life. If the Roman landowner had disappeared, if his
villa was a mound of ashes and charred stones, if his
cattle and serfs had been alike slaughtered or driven
off from the soil, the material work which four
hundred years of continuous life had done could not
wholly pass away. After all his slaughter and pillage,
the Englishman found himself in no mere desert.
On the contrary, he stood in the midst of a country,
the material framework of whose civilization remained
unharmed. The Roman road still struck like an

arrow over hill and plain. The Roman bridge still spanned river and stream. If farmer and landowner had disappeared, farm and field remained; and if the conquerors settled at all, it was inevitable that they should settle in the bulk of cases beside the homes and on the estates of the men they had driven out. It was thus that the Roman "vill" often became the English township; that the boundaries of its older masters remained the bound-marks of the new; that serf and læt took the place of colonus and slave; while the system of cultivation was probably in the case of both peoples sufficiently identical to need little change in field or homestead.[1]

*Roman
Kent.*
But if the old divisions of the land remained to furnish limits for the states of its conquerors, or bounds of field and farm for their settlers, the whole organization of government and society had disappeared with the men to whom it belonged. Rome was gone; and its law, its literature, its faith, had gone with it. The Briton himself was now simply a stranger, gazing back upon the land he had lost from a distant frontier. The mosaics, the coins, which we dig up in our fields, are no relics of our fathers, but of a world which our fathers' sword swept utterly away. How thoroughly the work was done we can see in a single instance, that of the first land which the invaders won. In the days before the Jutish conquest few parts of the island were wealthier

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[1] It is in this settlement on the existing estates, etc., that we find the explanation of many facts adduced by Mr. Coote, in his various works, to prove the continuity of the life of Roman Britain.

or more populous than the Caint or Kent, the chalk
upland which jutted into the Channel between the
alluvial flats of the Thames estuary and the mouth of
the Weald.[1] This district had, in fact, been one of
the earliest points of human settlement in Britain.   In
Roman times its towns were small and unimportant ;
those of the coast seem simply to have been military
stations of the Saxon shore, while Durovernum and
Durobrivæ were little clusters of houses that had
grown up at the passages of the Stour and the Med-
way.   But in the valleys of these rivers population
must have lain thickly ; even the flats along the
coast of the Thames were the scene of busy industries ;
and if the homesteads which studded the face of
the country were smaller and less splendid than
those of south-western Britain, their number, as well
as the absence of the military stations that were so
abundant elsewhere, shows the peace and prosperity
of a district which its position sheltered from the

[1] The Roman and Jutish Caint, it must be remembered,
occupied a far smaller space of ground than our modern county
of Kent ; for the Weald, as yet uninvaded by axe or plough,
threw its outskirts far and wide over the country on the south-
west.   Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 483, says : "If we
follow the main road from Hythe to Maidstone a little to the
north of Aldington and running to the east of Boughton, we
find a tract of country extending to the borders of Sussex and
filled with places ending in 'den' or 'hurst' . . . along the
edge of the Weald, within whose shades the 'swains' found
'mast and pasture.'"   He enumerates a few of them which form
a belt of mark or forest round the cultivated country quite
independent of the woods which lay between village and
village.   Even within the bounds of the earlier Caint, too, the
space fit for habitation was broken by thick woodlands like the
Forest of Blean.

Pictish forays that wasted the north and centre of
the island.[1] The greater number of such houses
lay along what had been the line of Hengest's
inroad, along the road from Canterbury to London,
and along the banks of the Medway. The fields
which then bordered the lower valley of this river
at Upchurch furnished the bulk of the common
hardware used throughout the country, and the
extent of its remains shows that it was the home
of a large working population.[2] Potteries hardly
less extensive existed on the brink of Romney Marsh,
while from pits at Dartford, Crayford, and Chisle-
hurst, chalk was exported to Zealand, on the coast of
which are still found altars to the goddess of the
Kentish chalk-workers.[3]

*Kent
after the
Conquest.*
But with the conquest of the Jutes all this wealth
and industry disappeared. The potteries sank into
heaps of ruins amidst marshes that took the place
of the meadows in which they stood. The country
houses, as their ruins show, became heaps of blackened
stone. The towns, as they fell beneath the con-
queror's sword, were left burnt and desolate. The
massacre which followed the victories of Hengest,
indeed, showed the merciless nature of the warfare of
the Jutes. While the wealthier Kentish landowners
fled in panic over the sea, the poorer Britons took
refuge in hill or forest, or among the neighbouring
fastnesses of the Weald, till hunger drove them from

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[1] See a paper on Roman Kent, by Roach Smith, in Archæol.
Cantiana, II. xxxviii.

[2] Wright's " Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 260, 261.

[3] Murray's " Kent," Introduction, pp. x. xi.

their lurking-places to be cut down or enslaved by their conquerors. It was in vain that some sought shelter within the walls of their churches, for the rage of the invaders seems to have burned fiercest against the clergy. The priests were slain at the altar, the churches fired, the peasants driven by the flames to fling themselves on a ring of pitiless steel.[1] For a while the ruin of the land must have seemed complete; and even when the settlement of the conquerors had brought a new life to its downs and river valleys, the wreck and solitude of the towns bore their witness to the completeness with which the older life had been done away. Durovernum remained

[1] Gildas, Hist., cap. 24, 25. "Confovebatur namque, ultionis justæ præcedentium scelerum causâ, de mari usque ad mare ignis orientalis, sacrilegorum manu exaggeratus, et finitimas quasque civitates agrosque populans, qui non quievit accensus, donec cunctam pene exurens insulæ superficiem rubrâ occidentalem trucique oceanum linguâ delamberet. . . . Ita ut cunctæ columnæ crebris arietibus, omnesque coloni cum præpositis ecclesiæ, cum sacerdotibus ac populo, mucronibus undique micantibus, ac flammis crepitantibus, simul solo sternerentur, et miserabili visu, in medio platearum, ima turrium edito cardine evulsarum, murorumque celsorum saxa, sacra altaria, cadaverum frusta, crustis ac semigelantibus purpurei cruoris tecta, velut in quodam horrendo torculari mixta viderentur, et nulla esset omnimodis, præter horribiles domorum ruinas, bestiarum volucrumque ventres, in medio sepultura. . . . Itaque nonnulli miserarum reliquiarum in montibus deprehensi acervatim jugulabantur; alii fame confecti accedentes, manus hostibus dabant, in ævum servituri, si tamen non continuo trucidarentur, quod altissimæ gratiæ stabat in loco; alii transmarinas petebant regiones, cum ululatu magno ceu celeusmatis vice, . . . alii montanis collibus, minacibus præruptis vallati, et densissimis saltibus, marinisque rupibus vitam, suspectâ semper mente, credentes. in patriâ licet trepidi perstabant."

a waste till Æthelberht's day, and it is not till the eighth century that we hear of any new dwellers at Dover.[1]   The sites of the deserted cities passed naturally into the common lands of the Cantwara, the folk-land which the Kentish king took for his own possession, or from which he made grants to his thegns ; and it is thus that if we look in Æthelberht's day for the site of Regulbium we find it occupied by the king's ' vill' of Reculver, while the Kentish Ceatta, no doubt through a royal grant, planted the ' ham' which has grown into our Chatham on the banks of the Medway in the territory of the forsaken Durobrivæ.   But even then he made his little settlement not within, but without its walls ; and when the town reappears in the days of Æthelberht, it is no longer under its old name but under that of the Jutish Hrof who had at last taken it for his home, as Hrofes-ceaster,[2] or Rochester.

The new
English
society.
As we stand amidst the ruins of such towns or country-houses, and recall the wealth and culture of Roman Britain, it is hard to believe that a conquest which left them heaps of crumbling stones was other than a curse to the land over which it passed.   But if the new England that sprang from the wreck of Britain seemed for the moment a waste from which the arts, the letters, the refinement of the world had fled hopelessly away, it contained within itself germs of a nobler life than that which had been destroyed.[3]   Here,

[1] Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm " (Anglia Sacra, ii. 20).

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 604 ; Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 3.

[3] In the sketch of our early institutions I have mainly followed the guidance of Professor Stubbs through the chapters which

as everywhere throughout the Roman world, the base
of social life was the peasant, crushed by a deepen-
ing fiscal tyranny into the slave; while the basis of
political life was the hardly less enslaved proprietor,
disarmed, bound like his serf to the soil, and power-
less to withstand the greed of a government in which
he took no part. But, whether politically or socially,
the base of the new English society was the freeman
who had been tilling, judging, or fighting for himself
by the Northern Sea. However roughly he dealt with
the material civilization of Britain while the struggle
went on, it was impossible that such a man could be a
mere destroyer. War in fact was no sooner over than
the warrior settled down into the farmer, and the
home of the ceorl rose beside the heap of goblin-
haunted stones that marked the site of the villa he
had burned. The settlement of the conquerors was
as direct a result of the character of the conquest as
the withdrawal of the conquered people. It was the
slowness of their advance, the small numbers of each
separate band in its descent upon the coast, that made
it possible for the invaders to bring with them, or to
call to them when their work was done, the wives and

open his "Constitutional History." It must be remembered that
we have little or no direct evidence for such a sketch, and can
only infer the character of our institutions at this time, first,
from the tenor of like German institutions in yet earlier days,
and, secondly, from the character which English institutions had
themselves assumed some centuries later, when we can trace
their existing form in the laws. Although, however, some
details may still remain doubtful, the general accuracy of the
conclusions which historical inquiry has reached in this matter
may be look on as established.

children, the læt and slave, even the cattle they had left behind them.[1] The wave of conquest was thus but a prelude to the gradual migration of a whole people.[2] For the settlement of the conquerors was nothing less than a transfer of English society in its fullest form to the shores of Britain. It was England that settled down on British soil, England with its own language, its own laws, its complete social fabric, its system of village life and village culture, its principle of kinship, its principle of representation. It was not as mere pirates or stray war-bands, but as peoples already made, and fitted by a common temper and common customs to draw together into one nation in the days to come, that our fathers left their home-land for the land in which we live.

Difficulties of union.
At first sight, indeed, there seemed little promise of national unity in the mass of war-bands and folks that had taken the place of the Provincials. One half of conquered Britain belonged to the Engle ; the bulk of the rest had fallen to the Saxon ; Kent and the Isle of Wight belonged to the Jute. Other peoples of the German coast seem to have joined in the work of conquest, for we may certainly add Frisians to the list of invaders, and probably Franks ; but it was only as individual warriors or as separate war-bands that these can have joined in the invasion, and if any trace of their settlement existed it has wholly disappeared. But Jute, Engle, and Saxon were camped separately on the land, nor is there any

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[1] For the difference between the British and English cattle, see Boyd Dawkins, " Early Man in Britain," pp. 491. 492.

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 72, 73.

ground for believing that in this earlier time they
regarded themselves as a single people. Even within
each of these three main tribes themselves there can
have been little unity or cohesion. On the eastern
coast we are distinctly told that war-band after war-
band landed under their own ealdormen, conquered
their own tracts, and fought with one another as well
as with the Britons before they were drawn together
into the folk of the East-Anglians. How universal
this state of things must have been we see from
the numerous traces of such small peoples that we
incidentally meet with in our later history. A single
list, for instance, which has been by chance preserved
to us, hands down the names of some thirty tribes,
apparently belonging for the most part to Mid-
Britain, of the bulk of whom all knowledge is lost,
though a few can still be identified by the geographical
character of their names.[1] But for this we should
know nothing of the existence of the Chilternsetna,
or people of the Chilterns ; of the Elmedsetna, or
settlers in Elmet ; of the Pecsetna, or that branch
of the Mercians who colonized the fastnesses of the
Peak ; or the Wrokensetna, who found a home at
the base of the Wrekin.[2]

Sporadic settlements of such isolated tribes, like the
Meonwara on the Southampton Water, meet us con-
stantly in the course of our story, and the dependent

*Separate
folks.*

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[1] See this list, which was originally printed by Sir Henry
Spelman in his Glossary, under the head *Hida*, in Kemble's
"Saxons in England," vol. i. pp. 81, 82.

[2] The word in the list is Wokensetna ; but a Mercian Charter
(Cod. Dip. 277) has the word " Wreocensetun."

kingdoms within the larger ones, such as that of
Oidilwald in the Deira of Oswiu's day,[1] point to the
survival of this separate life in one quarter or another
even when aggregation into larger groups had become
an irresistible tendency in the people at large.   Even
in Kent, quickly as it was organized into a single
kingdom, it would seem as if the conquerors originally
clustered around king or ealdorman in little groups,
which were only gradually gathered together into
one political body.   The dwellers in the reclaimed
flats of Romney Marsh, for instance, were long known
as the Merscwara, or Marsh-folk, a name which
points to a separate political existence at some early
time ; while along the coast to the east of them we
find in the name of Folkestone the trace of another
separate folk, which may, like the Merscwara, have
been only gradually drawn into the general commu-
nity that knew itself as the Cantwara, or dwellers in
the Caint.   There are still stronger traces of separate
life in the country west of the Medway, which was
afterwards known as West Kent.   In Kentish tradition
this tract represented an earlier kingdom under the
rule of its own chieftain, though dependent on the
Kentish king ; and the tradition is supported by the
foundation of a separate Bishoprick at Rochester, whose
prelates were dependent on the Kentish bishop at
Canterbury.[2]

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.

[2] Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 148, explains by
this second Kentish kingdom the Kentish practice of two kings
reigning together, as in the case of Eadric and Hlothere, or
Wihtred and Æthelberht II.   One of the later rulers, Sigired,
calls himself "King of half Kent' (Cod. Dip. 110, 114),

CHAP. IV.

The
Settlement
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Real unity.

But from the first the severance between such tribes must have been rather apparent than real. Even in their German homeland the ties of a common blood, common speech, common social and political institutions, were drawing the smaller peoples together into nations, such as the Allemannians, the Saxons, and the Franks, at the time when these adventurers pushed across the sea for the winning of Britain; and the tendency to union which they thus carried with them could only have been strengthened by the strife that followed. Their common warfare with the Briton could not but unite them more closely. If we judge from the names of English settlements, as from a few recorded incidents of the struggle, we should gather that each people gave help to its fellows in the course of the contest, that Jutish warriors fought in the host of Cerdic as it won the Gwent, and that Saxon war-bands aided in the reduction of East Anglia, as Engle war-bands helped in the Saxon victory over the Four Towns. How irresistible the tendency towards union was from the very beginning, indeed, we see from the fact that the separate existence of the smaller communities we have spoken of had for the most part come to an end by the close of the sixth century. At that time the various Jutish tribes of Kent, whatever may have been their original isolation, were definitely fused in the people of the Cant-wara; while the Chilternsetna were lost in the West-Saxons, as the Pecsetna were lost in the

Malmesbury (Gest. Reg. lib. i. sec. 10) speaks of the "reguli" whom Æthelberht subdued.

Mercians. No traces of the separate war-bands that conquered the island-like district on the eastern coast of Britain reach us in the recorded annals of the East-Anglians. When written history first shows us the new Britain in the pages of Bæda, we find the original mass of folks and war-bands already gathered together in some eight or nine distinct peoples ; [1] and even these showing a tendency to group themselves in three great masses which soon became the kingdoms of Northern, Central, and Southern Britain. To bring these three masses together into a single nation proved a longer and a harder task. But distinct as they remained for two hundred years we see no trace of consciousness of any race-difference between them. The lines of demarcation indeed which divide the one from the other are not race lines ; the earliest of these over-kingdoms, that of Æthelberht, embraces Jute, Engle, and Saxon alike within its pale, and in the later conquest for supremacy over Britain, the strife is not a twofold strife between Engle and Saxon, but a threefold strife of a purely political order, in which the Engle kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia wage a fiercer fight against one another than that of either against the Saxons of the south. The only differences, in fact, that we can find between the various peoples who settle over the face of Britain are differences of dialect, or distinctions in the form of a buckle [2] or the shape of a grave-mound. As early

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 15.
[2] Wright (" Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 481-2) considers the round buckles as peculiar to the Jutes, the cross-shaped to the Engle.

as Bæda's day they had learned to recognize them-selves under a single collective name, as the people of the English.[1] In the whole structure of their life, political, social, domestic, religious, all were at one.

Of the character of their life at this early time we can only speak generally. Barbarous as it seemed to Roman eyes, it was already touched by the civiliza-tion with which Rome was slowly transforming the barbaric world. Even in their German homeland, though its border nowhere lay along the border of the Empire, Saxon and Engle were far from being strange to the arts and culture of Rome. Roman commerce, indeed, reached the shores of the Baltic along tracks which had been used for ages by traders, whether Etruscan[2] or Greek ; and we have abundant evidence that the arts and refinement of Rome were brought into contact with these men of the north. Brooches, sword-belts, and shield-bosses which have been found in Sleswick, and which can be dated not later than the close of the third century, are clearly either of Roman make or closely modelled on Roman metal-work ;[3] and discoveries of Roman coins in Sleswick peat-mosses afford a yet more conclusive proof of direct intercourse with the Empire. But, apart from these outer influ-ences, the men of the three tribes were far from being mere savages. They were fierce warriors, but they were also busy fishers and tillers of the soil, as proud

Civilization of the English.

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[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 1, " quinque gentium linguis. . . . Anglorum videlicet, Brittonum, Scottorum, Pictorum, et Latinorum."— Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 143.

[2] Boyd Dawkins, " Early Man in Britain," chap. xiii.

[3] Lubbock, " Prehistoric Times," pp. 9-11 ; Wright, " Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 498.

of their skill in handling plough and mattock or steering the rude boat with which they hunted walrus and whale as of their skill in handling sword and spear.[1] They were hard drinkers, no doubt, as they were hard toilers, and the "ale-feast" was the centre of their social life. But coarse as the revel might seem to modern eyes, the scene within the timbered hall which rose in the midst of their villages was often Homeric in its simplicity and dignity. Queen or Eorl's wife with a train of maidens bore ale-bowl or mead-bowl[2] round the hall, from the high settle of King or Ealdorman in the midst to the benches ranged around its walls, while the gleeman sang the hero-songs of his race. They had already a literature ; and though the Roman missionaries had not as yet introduced their alphabet, the runic letters which these men shared with the other German races sufficed to record on tablets of oak or beech an epic such as that of Beowulf, or the rude annals which, as those pre-served in our present Chronicle show, already existed as materials for history.[3] Dress and arms showed traces of a love of art and beauty, none the less real that it was rude and incomplete. Rings, amulets, ear-rings, neck pendants, proved in their workmanship the deftness of the goldsmith's art. Cloaks were often fastened with golden buckles of curious and exquisite form, set sometimes with rough jewels and inlaid with

[1] Beowulf, vv. 1090-1120.

[2] See the fine scene in Beowulf, vv. 1226 to 1254, where Hrothgar's queen bears the mead-cup about his hall to the warriors and the hero.

[3] Guest, "Early Eng. Settl." p. 39.

enamel.[1] The bronze boar-crest on the warrior's helmet, the intricate adornment of the warrior's shield, tell, like the honour in which the smith was held, their tale of industrial art.[2] The curiously-twisted glass goblets so common in the early graves of Kent, are shown by their form to be of English workmanship.[3] It is only in the English pottery, hand-made, and marked with zigzag patterns, that we find traces of rudeness.

Their Literature.

The same indications of a life far higher than that of mere barbarism are to be seen in their literature. Among the scanty relics óf our early poetry we still find a few pieces which date from a time before the conquest of Britian.[4] Most of them are mere fragments ; but even in these we find the two distinguishing features of our later verse—a tendency to melancholy and pathos, and a keen enjoyment and realization of outer nature.[5] The one large and complete work

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[1] Large quantities of such ornaments have been found in the older buri al-grounds, especially those of Kent. See the "Inventorium Sepulcrale" of Bryan Faussett for an account of these objects and their discovery.

[2] Beowulf, vv. 6 12-615. Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 486 ; Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 280.

[3] Roach Smith, in Arch. Cantiana, i. 46 ; Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," 495, etc.

[4] Such are "Deor's Complaint," a poem, says Mr. Sweet (in his sketch of the History of Anglo-Saxon Poetry in Hazlitt's edition of Warton's "History of English Poetry," 1871, Preface to vol. ii.), almost lyric in its character, in which Deor, a poet who has been s upplanted by a rival, consoles himself by thè thought of heroes who have borne and survived greater ills than he ; the "Gleeman's Tale," which is possibly a poetic riddle ; and a fragment on the attack of Fin's palace in Friesland.

[5] See in Beowulf, vv. 2719 to 2756, the description of Grendel's abode, that "hidden land, where wolves lurk, windy

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which remains, the song of Beowulf, is the story of that hero's deeds ; how alone at nightfall in King Hrothgar's hall he met the fiend Grendel, who for twelve years had carried off the king's warriors to devour them in his den ; how to complete his victory he plunged into the dreadful lake where Grendel and Grendel's mother made their dwelling, and brought back their heads to Hrothgar ; how, himself become a king, he is called in old age to meet a dragon that assails his people, forsaken by his comrades, and, though victorious, drained of his life-blood by the wounds he receives in the terrible grapple. The song as we have it now is a poem of the eighth century, the work it may be of some English missionary of the days of Bæda and Boniface, who gathered in the homeland of his race the legends of its earlier prime.[1]

nesses, perilous fen-tracts, where the mountain stream, shrouded in mists, pours down the cliffs, deep in earth. Not far from here stands the lake over-shadowed with groves of ancient trees, fast by their roots. There a dread fire may be seen every night shining wondrously in the water. The wisest of the sons of men knows not the bottom. When the heath-stalker, the strong-horned stag, hard pressed by the hounds, coursed from afar, seeks shelter in the wood, he will yield up his life on the shore sooner than plunge in and hide his head. That is an accursed place ; the strife of waves rises black to the clouds when the wind stirs hostile storms, until the air darkens, the heavens shed tears." Hazlitt's "Warton," vol. ii. Introd. by Mr. Sweet, p. 11.

[1] Mr. Sweet (Hazlitt's "Warton," vol. ii. p. 10) says : "It is evident that the poem, as we have it, has undergone considerable alterations. In the first place there is a distinctly Christian element, contrasting strongly with the general heathen current of the whole. Many of these passages are so incorporated into the poem that it is impossible to remove them without violent alterations of the text ; others again are palpable interpolations.

But the thin veil of Christianity which he has flung over it fades away as we follow the hero-legend of our fathers ; and the secret of their moral temper, of their conception of life, breathes through every line. Life was built with them, not on the hope of a hereafter, but on the proud self-consciousness of noble souls. "I have this folk ruled these fifty winters," [1] sings the hero-king as he sits death-smitten beside the dragon's mound. "Lives there no folk-king of kings about me—not any one of them—dare in the warstrife welcome my onset ! Time's change and chances I have abided, held my own fairly, sought not to snare men ; oath never sware I falsely against right. So for all this may I glad be at heart now, sick though I sit here, wounded with death-wounds !" In men of such a temper, strong with the strength of manhood and full of the vigour and the love of life, the sense of its shortness and of the mystery of it all woke chords of a pathetic poetry. "Soon will it be," ran the warning rime, "that sickness or sword-blade shear thy strength from thee, or the fire ring thee, or the flood whelm thee, or the sword grip thee, or arrow hit thee, or age o'ertake thee, and thine eye's brightness sink down in darkness." Strong as he might be, man struggled in vain with the doom that

. . . Without these additions and alterations it is certain that we have in Beowulf a poem composed before the Teutonic conquest of Britain. The localities are purely continental ; the scenery is laid among the Goths of Sweden and the Danes ; in the episodes the Swedes, Frisians, and other continental tribes appear, while there is no mention of England, or the adjoining countries and nations."

[1] Beowulf, vv. 5458 to 5474.

encompassed him, that girded his life with a thousand perils and broke it at so short a span. "To us," cries Beowulf in his last fight, " to us it shall be as our Weird betides, that Weird that is every man's lord!" But the sadness with which they fronted the mysteries of life and death had nothing in it of the unmanly despair which bids men eat and drink for to-morrow they die. Death leaves man man, and master of his fate. The thought of good fame, of manhood, is stronger than the thought of doom. "Well shall a man do when in the strife he minds but of winning longsome renown, nor for his life cares!"[1] "Death is better than life of shame!"[2] cries Beowulf's sword-fellow. Beowulf himself takes up his strife with the fiend, "go the weird as it will." If life is short, the more cause to work bravely till it is over. "Each man of us shall abide the end of his life-work, ; let him that may work, work his doomed deeds ere death come!"[3]

*Their
Religion.*
It is in words such as these that we must look for the religious temper of Saxon or Engle, rather than in what is commonly called their religion. Their gods were the same as those of the rest of the German peoples, for though Christianity had won . over the Roman Empire, it had not penetrated as yet into the forests of the north. Our own names for the days of the week still recall to us the deities whom our fathers worshipped. Wednesday is the day of Woden, the war-god, the guardian of ways and boundaries, the

[1] Beowulf, vv. 3073 to 3077.
[2] Beowulf, vv. 5774 to 5777.
[3] Beowulf, vv. 2777 to 2780.

inventor of letters, the common god of the whole conquering people, and whom each of the conquering tribes held to be the first ancestor of its kings.[1] Thursday is the day of Thunder, the god of air and storm, and rain ; as Friday is Frea's day, a deity of peace, and joy, and fruitfulness, whose emblems, borne aloft by dancing maidens, brought increase to every field and stall they visited.   Saturday may commemorate an obscure god, Sœtere ; and some early worship of sun and moon perhaps left its trace in the names of Sunday and Monday ;[2] while Tuesday was dedicated to Tiw, once like the Greek Zeus, with whose name his own is connected, the god of the sky, but who in later days sank into a dark and terrible deity to meet whom was death.   Behind these floated dim shapes of an older mythology ; Eostre, the god of the dawn or of the spring, who lent her name in after days to the Christian festival of the Resurrection ; Wyrd, the death-goddess, whose memory lingered long in the weird of northern superstition ; or the Shield Maidens, the mighty women who, an old rime tells us, "wrought on the battle-field their toil, and hurled the thrilling javelins."   Nearer to the popular fancy lay deities of wood and fell, like Nicor the water-

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. 15.   Woden was the ancestor of the royal stocks of Kent, East-Anglia, Essex, Mercia, Deira, Bernicia, by his sons Wehta, Casere, Seaxnote, Weothelgeat, Wægdæg, and Bældæg ; of the West-Saxons, by his great-grandson, Frothegar. The ealdormen of the Lindiswara claimed descent from his son Winta. (See Genealogies in Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe, i. 248 et seq.)

[2] It is more probable, however, that when the Week passed from the Roman world into use among the Germans, these three names passed with it.

sprite, who left his name to our nixies and " Old Nick," or hero-gods of legend and song.   In the star-strown track of the Milky Way, our fathers saw a road by which the hero-sons of Waetla marched across the sky, and poetry only hardened into prose when they transferred the name of Watling Street to the great trackway which passed athwart the island they had won, from London to Chester.   The stones of Weyland's Smithy still recall the days when the new settlers told one another on the conquered ground the wondrous tale they had brought with them from their German home, the tale of the godlike smith Weland, who forged the arms that none could blunt or break, [1] just as they told around Wadanbury and Wadanhlaew the strange tale of Wade and his boat. [2]   When men christened mere and tree with Scyld's name, at Scyldsmere and Styldstreow, they must have been familiar with the story of the godlike child who came over the waters to found the royal line of the Gewissas.[3] So a name like Hnaefs-scylf shows that the tale of Hnaef was then a living part of English mythology ; [4] and a name like Aylesbury may preserve the last trace of the legend told of Weland's brother, the sun-archer Ægil.

But it is only in broken fragments that this mass of early faith and early poetry still lives for us, in

[1] For Weland's story see " Exeter Book," p. 367 ; and Kemble, " Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 421.

[2] For Wade see Kemble, " Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 420.

[3] For Scyld's tale see Beowulf, vv. 7 to 104.   Æthelheard, book iii.   Malmesbury, " Gesta Regum," lib. ii. p. 116.   Kemble, " Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 414.

[4] Hnaef, see Beowulf, line 2130 et seq.

a name, in the grey stones of a cairn, or in snatches
of verse embodied in our older song. Like all
ancient religion, indeed, such a faith, linking itself
as it did with the new settlers mainly through the
blood of their kings, embodied only in nature-myths
or poetic legends, and without any moral significance
for the guidance of men, had in it little of what the
modern world means by a religion; and the faint
traces of worship or of priesthood which we find in
later history show how lightly it clung to the
national life. There were temples, indeed, as we
see in Kent, in Northumbria, and in East Anglia
alike,[1] rough wooden buildings in a hallowed inclo-
sure, whose name of frith-geard or peace-yard tells of
a right of sanctuary, and whose inner shrine inclosed
images or emblems of the gods with altars before
them. But at the conversion such buildings were
changed, with no apparent shock to the popular con-
science, into Christian churches; and that right
of sanctuary which the frith-geard possessed still
clung to it under its new name of churchyard.
There were priests, too, whom custom forbade
to wield the warrior's weapon, or to mount the
warrior's horse, but who played a prominent part
not only in the religious but in the civil life of their
fellow tribesmen.[2] The story, however, of the con-
version of Britain to Christianity, which we have
soon to follow, shows how little religious weight or
influence these priests possessed. Only one of them

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 30; ii. 13, 15.

[2] Eddi's "Life of Wilfred," c. 1 (Raine, "Historians of Church
of York," p. 20).

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The
Settlement
of the
Conquerors.

Religion
and the
soil.

indeed is mentioned as playing a part in the religious change, and he is an active agent in promoting it.[1]

The weak hold of their religion on the new settlers strikes us as forcibly when we see how feebly their faith stamped itself on the face of the conquered country. Woden, indeed, the god of the race, left his name everywhere, on brook and pool and ford, on tree and barrow.[2] We hear his name in Wansbrook or Woden's brook, in Wanspool and Wansford, as in Woden's tree or Wanstreow, and Woden's barrow or Wanborough. Above all, as the border-god he hallows the boundary lines that part tribe from tribe or conquered from conqueror. The long dyke that stretches from a point just south of Malmesbury by Bath to the Bristol Channel, which had been a bound of the Belgæ, and may have served for a while as a bound of the West-Saxon, still retains the name which the last conquerors gave it, of the Woden's Dyke or Wansdyke. At an earlier stage of their advance, the Gewissas had halted on the crest of the great escarpment of the Wiltshire Downs, and here Wanborough, looking out over the Valley of the White Horse, marks the limits of Cynric's conquests.[3] But of his fellow-deities the traces are few. Thunder leaves signs of his worship in places like Thundersfield or Thundersley; and Pol, as

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[1] Coifi, Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 13.

[2] I follow here Kemble, " Saxons in England," i. cap. 12.

[3] We may add Wanborough, on the Hog's-Back of the North Downs, a spot which " in all probability has been a sacred site for every religion which has been received into Britain."— Kemble, i. 344.

the god whom the Northmen call Balder may
have been styled on English ground, still lingers
about us in our Polsteads and Poldons, our Polsleys
and Polthorns. Even the lesser deities or fiends of
popular fancy found hardly more numerous homes.
Here and there a few names preserve the memory of
the sacred stone, or mere, or tree, or mound, where
men reverenced of old Scyld, the hero-child, or Ægil,
the sun-archer, or shuddered at Grendel, the fiend.
But like the names of greater gods, such names are
thinly scattered over the soil. We feel as we glean
them that we are not in presence of an indigenous
religion; and it may be that in the weakness of its
grip on the soil to which it had been transplanted we
see one at least of the causes why the faith of the
English yielded so easily to the Christian missionaries.

Of their military life we naturally know more than *The English as warriors.*
of their religious. We meet them first as seamen,
and in spite of hasty assertions to the contrary, there
never was a time from that age to this when English-
men lost their love for the sea.[1] Everywhere through-
out Beowulf's song, as everywhere throughout the
life that it pictures, we catch the salt whiff of the sea.
The warrior is as proud of his sea-craft as of his
war-craft ; sword in hand he plunges into the waves
to meet walrus and sea-lion ; he tells of his whale-chase
amidst the icy waters of the north.[2] The same sea-
faring temper shows itself in later days in the very
names of the bark that traverses the sea. In the

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[1] The common statement which attributes our love of the sea
to the coming of the Danes is a simple error.

[2] Beowulf, vv. 1070 to 1120.

fond playfulness of English verse the ship became
the " wave-floater," the " foam-necked," " like a bird "
as it skimmed the wave-crest, " like a swan " as its
curved prow breasted the swan-road of the sea. With
their landing in Britain, however, the purely seafaring
life of the pirates was over, but they showed them-
selves none the less formidable as warriors on land.
In his own eyes, indeed, every one of the conquerors
of Britain was above all a warrior. The real opening
of his life, his passing from boyhood to manhood, was
the day when at the age of fifteen [1] the delivery of
arms to him made him a full member of the folk as it
made him a warrior of the host, or folk in arms. The
armour of such a freeman has been preserved for us in
the grave-mounds which are scattered over the face
of England : the coat of ringed mail ; [2] the long iron
sword [3] with its single edge, its hilt curiously wrought
of silver or bronze, or scored with mystic runes, [4] its

[1] At twelve (Ll. Hloth. et Ead. 6) ; then at twelve (Æthelstan
II. c. i.) ; and then at fifteen (Æthelstan VI. 12). (Thorpe's
" Ancient Laws," vol. i. p. 31, 199, 241.)

[2] See Beowulf, v. 673, for the warrior's " grey sarks " ; and cf.
'' Laws of Ine," 54 (Thorpe's " Ancient Laws," vol. i. p. 139).

[3] " In the large broad-sword may be recognised the ' spatha '
in common use by many of the Roman auxiliaries, and by the
Romans themselves in later times. From their weight and
length they could only be wielded by horsemen."—Roach Smith,
on Anglo-Saxon remains at Faversham, etc. Archæol. Cantiana,
i. 47. " The spear may be called the national weapon."—Ib. In
the English grave-grounds two kinds of spears are found, one
like the Roman pilum, another smaller and slighter, like the
framea of Tacitus, which was part of the equipment of horse-
men. The spear was valued above the sword. Ine's " Laws," 29
(Thorpe's " Ancient Laws," vol. i. p. 121).

[4] Beowulf, line 3393, " So was on the surface of the bright

wooden scabbard, tipped and edged with bronze ; the short seax, at once dagger and knife, slung like the sword from the girdle ; the long ashen spear ; the small round " war-board " or shield of the yellow lime-wood with its iron boss, which was held in the warrior's hand ; the skull-cap or helmet with the iron-wrought figure of a boar above it. From the day of his arming with arms such as these, the training of the freeman was in war.[1] His very sports were of warlike sort. The wolf was still common, the bear yet lingered in the woods, the wild boar roused from its lair rushed madly on the huntsmen, the wild ox stood at bay in the forest depths. Often the chase was a mimic war ; the wood was surrounded, and wild beast and deer were driven by the serfs into high-fenced inclosures, where the nobler huntsmen with bow and hunting-spear slew them at will.

But this mimicry of war had soon to be exchanged for war itself. The world of these men was in fact a world of warfare ; tribe warred with tribe, and village with village ; even within the village itself feuds parted household from household, and passions of hatred and vengeance were handed on from father to son.

Life itself warlike.

gold with runic letters rightly marked, set, and laid, for whom that sword was first made, with hilt twisted and variegated like a snake."

[1] For early English arms see Wright, " Celt, Roman, and Saxon," pp. 470-478. The type of arms remained unaltered till the coming of the Danes. The axe, which was common enough among the Franks, is but seldom found even in Kent ; elsewhere it is of the rarest occurrence. Arrow-heads, too, though sometimes found, are rare.

To live at all, indeed, in this early world it was needful, if not to fight, at any rate to be ready to fight. It was by his own right hand that a man kept life and goods together ; it was his own right hand that guarded him from wrong, or avenged him if wrong were done. Law had not as yet trodden the blood-feud under foot, or undertaken the task of carrying its own dooms into effect ; it had done little more than give form to the right of personal vengeance.[1] And besides the world of social strife there was the wider field of public war, the fight of tribe with tribe, and people with people. It was by no chance that the Folk, when it gathered to the Folk-moot, gathered in arms,[2] that even the deliberations of the assembled tribesmen were the " rede" of warriors, and that the " aye, aye," with which they approved the counsel of the Ealdormen was half-drowned by the clash of spear on shield. The very form of a people was wholly military. The Folk-moot was in fact the war-host, the gathering of every freeman of the tribe in arms. The head of the Folk, whether Ealdorman or King, was the leader whom the host chose to command it. Its Witenagemote or meeting of wise men was the host's council of war, the gathering of those ealdormen who had brought the men of their villages to the field.

The Host.   The host was formed by levies from the various districts of the tribe ; the larger of which may have owed their name of " hundreds " to the hundred warriors which each originally sent to it.[3] In historic times

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[1] " Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law," cap. iv. " Legal Procedure."
[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 32.   [3] Ibid. i. 81, 112.

however, the regularity of such a military organization,

if it ever existed, had passed away, and the quotas varied with the varying custom of each district. But men, whether many or few, were still due from each district to the host, and a cry of war at once called tun-reeve and hundred-reeve with their followers to the field. However rude such a military organization may seem, it had in it qualities which no soldier will undervalue. Each group of warrior-kinsmen who fought in loose order round ealdorman or lord was bound together by the tie of blood, by the mutual trust of men who had been life-long comrades, by a life-long practice in arms, and by the discipline that comes of obedience habitually rendered to one who was recognized as a natural chief. But the strength of an English army lay not only in these groups of villagers. Mingled with them were the voluntary war-bands that gathered round distinguished chiefs. From the earliest times of German society it had been the wont of young men greedy of honour or seeking training in arms to bind themselves as "comrades" to king or chief.[1] The leader whom they chose gave them horses, arms, a seat in his mead hall, and gifts from his hoard. The "comrade" on the other hand—the gesith or theyn, as he was called—bound himself to follow and fight for his lord. The principle of personal dependence as distinguished from the warrior's general duty to the folk at large was embodied in the thegn. " Chieftains fight for victory," says Tacitus ; " comrades for their chieftain." When one of Beowulf's "comrades" saw his lord hard bested "he

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 27.

minded him of the homestead he had given him, of the folk-right he gave him as his father had it ; nor might he hold back then." Snatching up sword and shield, he called on his fellow-thegns to follow him to the fight. " I mind me of the day," he cried, " when we drank the mead, the day we gave pledge to our lord in the beer hall as he gave us these rings, our pledge that we would pay him back our war-gear, our helms and our hard swords, if need befel him. Unmeet it is, methinks, that we should bear back our shields to our home unless we guard our lord's life." [1]

Organization of the State.

It was this military organization of the tribe that gave from the first its form to the civil organization. In each of the little kingdoms which rose on the wreck of Britain, the host would camp on the land it had won, and the divisions of the host supplied here as in its older home a rough groundwork of local distribution. The land occupied by the hundred warriors who formed the unit of military organization became perhaps the local hundred ; though it is needless to attach any notion of precise uniformity, either in the number of settlers or in the area of their settlement, to such a process as this, any more than to the army organization which the process of distribution reflected.[2] From the large amount of public land which we find existing afterwards it has been conjectured with some probability that the number of settlers was far too small to occupy the whole of the country at their disposal,

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[1] Beowulf, vv. 5259 *et seq.*
[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 81, 82.

and this unoccupied ground became "folk-land," the common property of the tribe as at a later time of the nation.[1] What ground was actually occupied may have been assigned to each group and each family in the group by lot ; and the little knots of kinsmen drew again together in "tun" and "ham" beside the Thames or the Trent, as they had settled beside the Elbe or the Weser.   But the peculiar shape which the civil organization of these communities assumed was determined by a principle familiar to the Germanic races and destined to exercise a vast influence on the future of mankind.   This was the principle of representation.   The four or ten villagers who followed the reeve of each township to the general muster of the hundred were held to represent the whole body of the township from whence they came.[2]   Their voice was its voice, their doing its doing, their pledge its pledge.   The Hundred-moot, a moot which was made by this gathering of the representatives of the townships that lay within its bounds, became in this way a court of appeal from the moots of each separate village as well as of arbitration in dispute between township and township.   The judgment of graver crimes and of life or death fell to its share ; while it necessarily possessed the same right of law-making for the hundred that the village-moot possessed for each separate village.[3]   And an hundred-moot stood above

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 82.   [2] Ibid. i. 103.

[3] For the Hundred-moot, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 119, 120.   He adds, "In the south of England the names of the hundreds are often derived from those of the central towns ; but in the midland and northern districts they seem like echoes of a

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town-moot, so far above the hundred-moot stood the
Folk-moot, the general muster of the people in arms,
at once war-host and highest law-court and general
Parliament of the tribe. But whether in Folk-moot
or Hundred-moot, the constitutional forms, the forms
of deliberation and decision, were the same. In each
the priests proclaimed silence, the ealdormen of higher
blood spoke, groups of freemen from each township
stood round, shaking their spears in assent, clashing
shields in applause, settling matters in the end by
loud shouts of " Aye " or " Nay." [1]

The King.

It seems probable that the conquering tribes had
hitherto known nothing of Kings in their own father-
land, where each was satisfied in peace time with
the customary government of hundred-reeve or
Ealdorman, while it gathered at fighting times under
war-leaders whom it chose for each campaign. But
in the long and obstinate warfare which they waged
against the Britons it was needful to find a common

wilder and more primitive society. The Yorkshire wapentake of
Skyrack recalls the Shire Oak as the place of meeting ; so in
Derbyshire we have Appletree ; in Hertfordshire, Edwinstree ;
in Herefordshire, Webtree and Greytree ; in Worcestershire,
Dodingtree ; in Leicestershire, Gartree. Osgodcross, Ewcross,
Staincross, Buckross, mark centres of jurisdiction which received
names after the acceptance of Christianity. Claro or Clarhow,
in Yorkshire, was the moot-hill of its wapentake ; similarly,
Leicestershire has Sparkinho ; Norfolk, Greenho and Grimshoe ;
and Lincolnshire, Calnodshoe. Others preserve the names of
some ancient lord. or hero, as the Worcestershire Oswaldslaw,
and the Lincolnshire Aslacoe ; or the holy well, as the Yorkshire
Hallikeld. The Suffolk Thingoe preserves a reminiscence of the
court itself as the Thing."

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 32.

leader whom the various tribes engaged in conquests
such as those of Wessex or Mercia might follow ; and
the ceaseless character of a struggle which left few
intervals of rest or peace raised these leaders into a
higher position than that of temporary chieftains.
It was no doubt from this cause that we find Hengest
and his son Æsc raised to the kingdom in Kent, or
Ælle in Sussex, or Cerdic and Cynric among the
West Saxons.   But, sprung as he was from war, the
king was no mere war-leader, nor was he chosen on
the ground of warlike merit.   His office was not
military but national ; his creation marked the moment
when the various groups of conquering warriors felt
the need of a collective and national life ; and the
ground of his choice was his descent from the national
god, Woden.   As representing this national life,
his rank was a permanent, not a temporary one :
and the association of son with father in the new
kingship marked the hereditary character which
distinguished it from the office of an Ealdorman.[1]
The change was undoubtedly a great one, but it
was less than the modern conception of kingship
would lead us to imagine.   Hereditary as the
succession was within a single house, each succes-
sive king was still the free choice of his people, and
for centuries to come it was held within a people's
right to pass over a claimant too weak or too wicked
for the throne.   In war indeed the king was
supreme.   But in peace his power was narrowly
bounded by the customs of his people and the rede
of his wise men.   Justice was not as yet the king's

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 75-77.

justice, it was the justice of village and hundred and folk in town-moot and hundred-moot and folk-moot. It was only with the assent of the wise men that the king could make laws and declare war and assign public lands and name public officers. Above all, should his will be to break through the free customs of his people, he was without the means of putting his will into action, for the one force he could call on was the host, and the host was the people itself in arms.

Eorl and Ceorl.

Directly, therefore, the new kingship made as yet little change in the political life of the conquering peoples. But indirectly it brought about from the first a great social change. An English community knew but two orders of men, the ceorl or the freeman, and the eorl or the noble.[1] The freeman was the base of the village society. He was the " free-necked man," whose long hair floated over a neck which had never bowed to a lord. He was the " weaponed man" who alone bore spear and sword, and who alone preserved that right of self-redress or private war which in such a state of society formed the main check upon lawless outrage.[2] But the social centre of the village was the eorl, or as he was sometimes called the ætheling, whose homestead rose high above the lowlier dwellings of the ceorls. It is possible that in the original formation of German society the eorl represented the first settler in the waste, while the ceorls sprang from descendants of this

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[1] Læt and slave, of whom we speak later, did not belong to the community.

[2] Kemble, "Sax. in Engl." i. 131.

early settler who had in various ways forfeited their claim to a share in the original homestead, or more probably from incomers into the village who had since settled round it and been admitted to a share in the land and freedom of the community. But whatever may have been the origin of the distinction between freeman and noble, it had become a fixed element of their social order at the time when Engle and Saxon crossed into Britain. In every new settlement the eorl was distinguished from his fellow villagers by his wealth and his nobler blood, he was held by them in an hereditary reverence, and it was from him and his fellow nobles that host-leaders, whether of the hundred or the tribe, were chosen in times of war.

But with the rise of kingship a new social distinction began to grow up on the ground, not of hereditary rank in the community, but of service done to the king. It was from among the chiefs whose war-band was strongest that the leaders of the host were commonly chosen; and as these leaders grew into kings, the number of their thegns naturally increased. The rank of the 'comrades' too rose with the rise of their lord. The king's thegns were his body-guard, the one force ever ready to carry out his will. They were his nearest and most constant counsellors. As the gathering of petty tribes into larger kingdoms swelled the number of eorls in each realm and in a corresponding degree diminished their social importance, it raised in equal measure the rank of the king's thegns. A post among them was soon coveted and won by the greatest and noblest. Their service

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was rewarded by exemption from the general juris-
diction of hundred-moot or folk-moot, for it was
part of a thegn's meed for his service that he should
be judged only by the lord he served. Other meed
was found in grants of public land which made thegns
a local nobility, no longer bound to actual service
in the king's household or in the king's war-band,
but still bound to him by personal ties of allegiance
far closer than those which bound an eorl to the chosen
war-leader of his tribe. In a word, thegnhood con-
tained within itself the germ of the later feudalism
which was to battle so fiercely with the Teutonic
freedom out of which it grew.[1]

*The
Township.*

To view, however, the new settler in Britain simply
as a warrior would be false and incomplete. In the
old world the divorce which modern society has
established between the soldier and the citizen, the
fighter and the toiler, did not exist. No chasm
parted war from civil life : the solemn arming made
the young Englishman not only a warrior but a free-
man,[2] a man of the folk, a tiller with a right to his
share in field and pasture and waste, a ruler of his
village, with his own due place in village-moot and
hundred-moot. The unit of social life, indeed, was
the cluster of such farmers' homes, each set in its own
little croft, which made up the Township or the tun.
The tun was surrounded by an earthen mound

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[1] For Thegnhood, see Stubbs, Const. Hist, i. 27, 28, 175-85 ;
Kemble, ".Sax. in Engl." i. 162 *et seq.*

[2] "The young men are, till they are admitted to the use of
arms, members of the family only, not of the state."—Stubbs,
Const. Hist. i. 24.

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tipped with a stockade or quickset hedge, as well as
defended externally by a ditch :[1] and each township
was thus a ready-made fortress in war, while in peace
its intrenchments were serviceable in the feuds of
village with village, or house with house.   The import-
ance of its defences, indeed, was shown by the
customary law which forced every dweller within
them to take part in their rearing and repair.[2] Inside
the mound lay the homes of the villagers, the farm-
steads, with their barns and cattle stalls ; and in the
centre of them rose the sacred tree or mound where
the village with its elders met in the tun-moot which
gave order to their social and industrial life.   Outside
the mound in close neighbourhood to the village lay
the home pastures and folds, where the calves and
lambs of individual cultivators were reared.   In these,
and in the "yrfeland," or "family estate," held apart
from the lands of his fellow-freemen by the ætheling
or noble,[3] we find the first traces of a personal pro-
perty strongly in contrast with the common holding
which prevailed through the rest of the township.[4]
Beyond and around these home-pastures lay the
village plough-land, generally massed together in

[1] "The tun," says Professor Stubbs, Const. Hist. vol. i.
p. 93, note, "is originally the inclosure or hedge, whether of the
single farm or the inclosed village ; as the burh is the fortified
house of the powerful man."

[2] "Laws of Æthelstan," i. 13 ; Thorpe's "Laws and Insti-
tutes," i. 207 ; Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 87.

[3] "Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law" (Boston, 1876), p. 55, etc.

[4] Nasse, in his "Land Community of the Middle Ages"
(Cobden Club, 1871), pp. 15-30, gives a full account of this
village system of common holding in early England.

three or four large "fields," each of which was broken
by raised balks into long strips of soil that were
distributed, in turn, among the village husbandmen.
The whole was inclosed by a borderland or mark,
which formed the common pasture where flock and
herd could be turned out by every freeman to graze,
though in numbers determined by usage or the rede
of the village-moot.[1]

*Its
boundaries.*
For the most part each township lay, no doubt, with-
in the area of older British or Roman settlements, but
its bounds were no longer marked by the measure-
ments and the landmarks of the Roman surveyor.   As
in many of our modern settlements, where population
and property have hardly come into being, the
boundary line could only be drawn from one natural
object to another.   In a country where woodland was
so frequent, the mark-tree could not fail to be
common,[2] and the need of forming a boundary line

[1] Beside the free township, there were, no doubt from the earliest
times, townships which had grown up round the house of a noble,
or ætheling, and which was tenanted by his dependants.   In
such cases, however, as yet, the village organization was little
affected by the lord's neighbourhood ; he no doubt named its
reeve; but the reeve and the men of the township judged ac-
cording to custom, and distributed lands as in other townships.
—Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 93-4.   The land itself, however, was
in such a case the lord's, and not the common freehold of the
villagers ; and would, no doubt, be held from the first by them
subject to service on the portion which the lord held in his
personal possession.   In later times the dependent townships
became an important body; but in the first days of the settle-
ment they were probably exceptional.   Palgrave, however,
regarded them as from the first the common form of English
holding (" Commonwealth," i. p. 65).

[2] The trees most frequently named in these land-boundaries

may have combined with some survival of the older
tree-worship in the dedication of such objects to hero
or lord.   We hear of Scyld's tree, and Nicor's thorn,
of Tiw's thorn, or Freya's tree, as landmarks of dis-
tricts or estates ; the special god of border and
mark gave his name to the Woden's oak or the
Woden's stock ;[1] while sometimes what must have been
a sacred group of trees, as in the Kentish Seven-oaks,
forms a starting-point for the border lines of more
than one district.   The choice of burial-mounds or
burial places, which was almost as common, may have
been dictated by like mingled motives of convenience
and religion ; but for the most part the boundary
track runs naturally enough from one feature of the
landscape to another, from the "marked oak," along
the "marked eaves," or edges of forest or copse, by
the "border brook," and over the hero's "hlaew" or
burial-mound to the 'grey stones' that pointed back
to a primæval eld.[2]

If we pass from the township to the homes within
its bounds, we see the freeman himself in that outer
garb of peace and industry which has been brought
down to us by the ploughman and peasant of to-day,
in his smock-frock, a coarse linen overcoat that fell
to the knees, and whose tight sleeves and breast were
worked with elaborate embroidery.[3]   Feet and legs

*The
Freeman's
home.*

are the oak, ash, beech, thorn, elder, lime, and birch.—Kemble,
"Saxons in England," vol. . p. 52, *note*.
  [1] Kemble, Cod. Dip. 436, 268, 174, 262, 496, 287.
  [2] Kemble, "Saxons in England," 52, *note* 4.
  [3] It was only in texture and colour that this dress differed
in different classes of society.   It was either of linen or wool.
(Bæda, H. E. iv. 19.)   The noble was distinguished from the

were wrapped in linen bands, cross-gartered and party-coloured, as high as the knees ;[1] a hood sheltered the head in winter-tide ; and among the nobles or wealthier ceorls, a short cloak of blue cloth, often embroidered with fanciful figure-work, and fastened at the shoulder with a costly buckle, was thrown over the frock for warmth or ornament.[2] The house of such a villager naturally varied in size and importance with the wealth and rank of its owner. Dwellings were everywhere of wood.[3] Even in the wealthier Roman villas only the substructures seem to have been of stone or brick ; and the new settlers, accustomed to wooden dwellings in their own land, found in Britain a wealth of forest and woodland which supplied abundant material for construction near every township.[4] The centre of the homestead was

ceorl by his embroidered belt and golden sword-hilt.—Kemble, "Saxons in England," vol. ii. p. 145.

[1] Hosen were sometimes made of hide softened with grease or fat (Bæda, Vit. Cuthbert, c. xviii.).

[2] The love of bright and varied colours was strong in both men and women ; in later days monasticism had no harder battle to fight than in bringing its votaries to protect themselves with the undyed vestments required by its rule. (See Cuthbert's struggle for this at Lindisfarne, Bæda, "Opera Minora," Stevenson, p. 82.) And down to the very era of the Danish wars, saints and councils were busy denouncing the silken hoods and the gaily-coloured leg-bands, which broke even the garb of the English clergy.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 14 ; iii. 16, 17.

[4] As the country cleared, the "silva infructuosa" or wood reserved on every farm for building and fencing, became of increasing importance, as is shown by the laws against cutting down or burning trees, as well as by the inclusion of such woods in the Domesday survey.

the hall, with the hearth-fire in the midst of it,[1] whose
smoke made its escape as best it could through a hole
in the roof. The hall, indeed, was the common living-
place of all the dwellers within the house. Here
the " board," set up on trestles when needed, furnished
a rough table for the family meal; and when the
board was cleared away, the women bore[2] the wooden
beer-cups or drinking-horns to the house-master and
his friends as they sat on the settles or benches
ranged round the walls,[3] while the gleeman sang his
song,[4] or the harp was passed around from hand to
hand.[5] Here, too, when night came and the fire died
down, was the common sleeping-place, and men lay
down to rest on the bundles of straw which they
had strewn about its floor.[6]

Beside the hall stood chambers for women and the
household, while around the farm-yard were stable
and threshing-floor and barn. With so thin and
scattered a population, and at a time when even
internal trade had hardly begun to exist, the home-

[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. 10.

[2] Bæda, Vit. Cuthb. c. xxix. H. E. v. 4.

[3] For washing of guests' hands and feet, see Bæda, Vit. Cuthb.
c. xxix. For the banquet and drinking-bouts, Eddi, " Life of
Wilfred," c. xvi. " convivium trium dierum et noctium."

[4] For gleemen and buffoons, Beowulf, vv. 2134 et seq. A
council at Gloucester in 747 classes among "ludicrarum artium"
those of " poetarum, citharistarum, musicorum, scurrorum."—
Haddan and Stubbs, " Councils," iii. 369.

[5] See Cædmon's story, postea. Dunstan in later days carries
his harp in his hand on visits, and loves " carmina gentilitatis "
and " nænia."

[6] Beowulf, vv. 1381-1385.

stead had to be in the main its own provider : the
grain had not only to be sown and reaped but to
be made into bread in the household, as the flax was
not only gathered but woven into garments.   To
woman fell much of the outer and almost all this
inner farm work.   It was she who milked the kine
and shore the sheep, who made the cheese and combed
the wool and beat the flax ; while her name of the
' spinster ' still reminds us how she spun the thread and
wove the wool of every garment.[1]   The buildings in
which this work went on lay round each larger home-
stead ; the mill for grinding the ' grits ' or rough
corn and the finer wheat-meal,[2] the oven where the
loaf was baked, common loaf, or alms loaf, or white
bread of pure wheat, or raised loaf and cake,[3] the
sheds for storing wool and honey and wax,[4] the malt-
house and the brewery, with its bright ale, and mild
ale, and smooth ale, and beer,[5] the dairy with its
butter and its cheese.[6]   The outer work of the farm
fell upon the freeman and his serfs.   Ox-herd and

[1] Among the poetic names for woman was " freoðowebbe,"
the " weaver of peace," which reminds us of her subtler
influence as reconciler in the home.   Beowulf, v. 3880.

[2] Cod. Dip. 166, 226.

[3] Cod. Dip. 226, 235.

[4] Cod. Dip. 288, 313, 231-235.

[5] We hear of all these varieties as early as the seventh century,
as well as of Welsh ale and sweetened Welsh ale.   Cod. Dip. 166,
1088.   Wine may have been introduced by the Christian mis-
sionaries, but it was in use in very early times.   Bæda, H. E.
lib. i. c. 1.

[6] Cod. Dip. 135, 288.   Ini's Laws, sec. 70 ; Thorpe, " Laws
and Institutes," vol. i. p. 147.

cow-herd, shepherd and goat-herd, the swine-herd who drove the hogs into forest and woodland to feed on the oak-mast, the barn-man and the sower, were serfs in wealthier households, or on the estate of the lord who had gathered a township about him ; but in the free townships the poorer freeman must have been his own labourer, and the toil necessitated by the system of common culture was severe. The open lands of the common pasture were often far from any homestead, so that through the long winter nights, from Martinmas to Easter, the villagers had to take their turn in folding and guarding the horses and cattle that pastured on them. The need of fencing off the common meadow into separate grass fields when the grass began to grow afresh in the spring was a yet more serious burden ;[1] and besides all these the villager had to help in the maintenance of mound and ditch around the townships, as well as to be ready when occasion called to join the hue and cry in chase of stolen cattle, or to follow the reeve of his township to hundred-moot or folk-moot.

The dwellers in such a township were not men who had casually come together. As the blood-bond gave its form to English warfare, so it gave its form to English society. Kinsmen, as we have seen, fought side by side in the hour of battle, and the feelings of

The Kin.

[1] " If ceorls have a common meadow, or other partable land, to fence, and some have fenced their part, some have not, and strange cattle come in and eat up the common corn or grass, let those go who own the gap and make compensation to the others."—Laws of Ini, iii. 42 ; (Thorpe's "Laws and Institutes," vol. i. p. 129.)

honour and discipline which held the host together
were drawn from the common duty of every man in
each little group of warriors to his house.   And as
they fought side by side on the field, so they dwelt
side by side on the soil.   Harling abode by Harling,
and Billing by Billing, and each 'wick' and 'ham'
and 'stead' and 'tun' took its name from the kinsmen
who dwelt together in it.   In this way the house or
ham of the Billings was Billingham, and the tun or
township of the Harlings was Harlington.[1]   The
life of the individual freeman indeed was all but
lost in that of the family.[2]   When he was a child
his kinsmen were bound by custom to watch over
and guard him from wrong, even should the wrong
be at his father's hand.   When he wedded, it was
among the kinsfolk that he had to find him sureties
and witnesses.   If a blood-feud sprung up, the kin
were bound to give life and limb in his defence.
Should he be slain, it was for them to avenge his

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[1] Professor Stubbs (Const. Hist. vol. i. p. 92) says : " In
England it is probable that all the primitive villages in whose
name the patronymic syllable 'ing' occurs, were originally
colonized by communities united either really by blood or by the
belief in a common descent."   See too, Kemble, " Saxons in
England," vol. i. p. 234, etc., and Robertson, " Scotland under
Early Kings," vol. ii. App. F. "The Kin."   The settlement of
these groups of kinsmen was probably determined by lot.   When
Cuthbert's relics found a home at Durham, the woodland around
was parted in this way among the new settlers.   See Sim. Dur.
Hist. Dunelm. Ecc. sec. 37 : "Eradicata undique silva et
unicuique mansionibus sorte distributis."   Larger divisions of
country, such as the Rapes of Sussex, bear traces of the same
mode of distribution.

[2] " Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law " (Boston, 1871), 121 et seq.

slaying. Order and law itself rested not on a man's personal action, but on the blood-bond that knit him to his kin. Every outrage was held to have been done by all who were linked in blood to the doer of it; every crime to have been done against all who were linked in blood to the sufferer from it. From this sense of the value of the family bond as a means of restraining the wrong-doer by forces which the tribe as a whole did not as yet possess sprang the first rude forms of English justice. The freeman's life and the freeman's limb had each its legal price.[1] " Eye for eye," and "limb for limb," ran the rough customary code, or for each fair damages. This price of life or limb, however, was paid not by the wrong-doer to the man he wronged, but by the kin or family of the wrong-doer to the kin or family of the wronged. The loss, and so the right to revenge, or to the " blood-wite" by which that right could be bought off, were the loss and the right not of the individual freeman but of his kin. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper, bound to protect him from wrong, to hinder him from wrong-doing, and to suffer with him and pay for him if wrong were done. So fully was this principle recognized that even if any man was charged before his fellow-tribesmen with crime his kinsfolk still remained in fact his sole judges; for it was by their solemn oath of his innocence or his guilt that he had to stand or fall.

The tie of blood, however, was widened by the

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[1] " The Laws of Æthelberht," the first English writing down of customary law, are little more than a list of the fines due for harm to life and limb.

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The Land.
larger tie of land. Land with the German race seems at a very early time to have become everywhere the accompaniment of full freedom.[1] The freeman was strictly the freeholder, and the exercise of his full rights as a free member of the community to which he belonged became inseparable from the possession of his 'holding' in it. But property had not as yet reached the stage of absolutely personal possession. The woodland and pasture-land of an English village were still undivided, and every free villager had the right of turning into it his cattle or swine. The meadow-land lay in like manner open and undivided from hay-harvest to spring. It was only when grass began to grow afresh that the common meadow was fenced off into grass-fields, one for each household in the village; and when hay-harvest was over fence and division were at an end again. The plough-land alone was permanently allotted in equal shares both of corn-land and fallow-land to the families of the freemen, though even the plough-land was subject to fresh division as the number of claimants grew greater or less.[2]

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 84, 199.

[2] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 56, 57; and see Nasse, "Land Community of the Middle Ages," 15-30. Traces of this common culture lasted here and there to very recent times. Some thirty years ago, on the Yorkshire wolds, " each farmer owned a certain number of ' ox-gangs,' a word still to be heard now and then from the mouths of old labourers), and lines of ancient balks and plough-lands, some straight, some curiously curved, still exist in places. The common pasture or meadow was divided into portions, each of which changed hands annually, and each had cut on a turf a distinguishing mark—as an arrow, a triangle, or a circle. At the harvest feast a number of apples, each

It was this sharing in the common land which
marked off the freeman or ceorl from the unfree man
or læt, the tiller of land which another owned.   As
the ceorl was the descendant of settlers who whether
from their earlier arrival or from kinship with the
original settlers of the village had been admitted to
a share in its land and its corporate life, so the læt
was a descendant of later comers to whom such a
share was denied, or in some cases perhaps of earlier
dwellers from whom the land had been wrested by
force of arms.   In the modern sense of freedom the
læt was free enough.   He had house and home of
his own, his life and limb were as secure as the ceorl's
—save as against his lord ; it is probable from what
we see in later laws that as time went on he was
recognized as a member of the nation, summoned to
the folk-moot, allowed equal right at law, and called
like the full freeman to the hosting.   But he was
unfree as regards lord and land.   He had neither
part nor lot in the common land of the village.   The
ground which he tilled he held of some freeman of
the tribe to whom he paid rent in labour or in kind.
And this man was his lord.   Whatever rights the
unfree villager might gain in the general social life of
his fellow countrymen, he had no rights as against
his lord.   He could leave neither land nor lord at his

marked in a corresponding fashion to one of the ' dæls,' or
divisions, were thrown into a tub of water.   Each farmer then
dived for an apple, and the mark which it carried indicated the
' dæl ' which was to be his for the coming year.   The Dolemoors
in Somersetshire were managed in a similar way, save that the
change was for a longer period."—Murray's " Yorkshire," p. 161.

will. He was bound to render due service to his lord in tillage or in fight. So long, however, as these services were done the land was his own. His lord could not take it from him ; and he was bound to give him aid and protection in exchange for his services.[1]

The Slave.   Far different from the position of the læt was that of the slave, though there is no ground for believing that the slave class was other than a small one. It was a class which sprang mainly from debt or crime. Famine drove men to " bend their heads in the evil days for meat : " the debtor, unable to discharge his debt, flung on the ground his freeman's sword and spear, took up the labourer's mattock, and placed his head as a slave within a master's hands. The criminal whose kinsfolk would not make up his fine became a crime-serf of the plaintiff or the king. Sometimes a father pressed by need sold children and wife into bondage. In any case the slave became part of the live stock of his master's estate, to be willed away at death with horse or ox, whose pedigree was kept as carefully as his own. His children were bondsmen like himself ; even a free-man's children by a slave mother inherited the mother's taint. " Mine is the calf that is born of my cow," ran an English proverb. It was not indeed slavery such as we have known in modern times, for stripes and bonds were rare : if the slave was slain, it was by an angry blow, not by the lash. But his master could slay him if he would ; it was but a chattel the less. The slave had no place in the

[1] For Læt, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 25, 52, 73, and *note*.

justice court, no kinsmen to claim vengeance or
guilt-fine for his wrong. If a stranger slew him his
lord claimed the damages ; if guilty of wrong-doing,
" his skin paid for him " under his master's lash. If
he fled he might be chased like a strayed beast, and
when caught he might be flogged to death. If the
wrong-doer were a woman she might be burned.[1]

With the public life of the village however the
slave had nothing, the læt in early days little, to do.
In its Moot, the common meeting of its villagers for
justice and government, a slave had no place or voice,
while the læt was originally represented by the lord
whose land he tilled.   The life, the sovereignty of the
settlement was solely in the body of the freemen
whose holdings lay round the moot-hill or the sacred
tree where the community met from time to time
to order its own industry [2] and to make its own laws.
Here new settlers were admitted to the freedom of
the township, and bye-laws framed and headman and
tithing-man chosen for its governance.   Here plough-
land and meadow-land were shared in due lot among
the villagers, and field and homestead passed from
man to man by the delivery of a turf cut from its
soil. Here strife of farmer with farmer was settled ac-
cording to the " customs " of the township as its elder
men stated them, and four men were chosen to follow
headman or ealdorman to hundred-court or war.   It

[1] For the slave, see Stubbs, " Const. Hist." i. 89 ; Kemble,
" Sax. in Engl." i. 185, etc.

[2] There is no ground for believing that the " tun-moot " was
a judicial court.   Its work was the ordering of the village life
and the village industry; and traces of this still survive
in our institutions..   " The right of the markmen to determine

is with a reverence such as is stirred by the sight of the head-waters of some mighty river that one looks back to these village-moots of Friesland or Sleswick. It was here that England learned to be a "mother of Parliaments." It was in these tiny knots of husband-men that the men from whom Englishmen were to spring learned the worth of public opinion, of public discussion, the worth of the agreement, the "common sense," the general conviction to which discussion leads, as of the laws which derive their force from being expressions of that general conviction. A humourist of our own day has laughed at Parliaments as "talking shops," and the laugh has been echoed by some who have taken humour for argument. But talk is persuasion, and persuasion is force, the one force which can sway freemen to deeds such as those which have made England what she is. The "talk" of the village moot, the strife and judgment of men giving freely their own rede and setting it as freely aside for what they learn to be the wiser rede of other men, is the groundwork of English history.

whether a new settler should be admitted to the township exists in the form of admitting a tenant at the court baron and customary court of every manor; the right of the mark-men to determine the 'bye-laws,' the local arrangment for the common husbandry, or the fencing of the hay-fields, or the proportion of cattle to be turned into the common pasture, exists still in the manorial courts and in the meetings of the townships; the very customs of relief and surrender, which are often regarded as distinctly feudal, are remnants of the polity of the time when every transfer of property required the wit-ness of the community to whose membership the new tenant was thereby admitted." Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 95, 96.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRIFE OF THE CONQUERORS.

577—617.

IMPORTANT as was the battle of Deorham in mark- *English and Britons.*
ing the point of transition between the earlier age
of conquest and the age of settlement which followed
it, it is of hardly less importance as marking a new
point of departure in the political relations of the
conquerors themselves. Nothing can be more remark-
able than the change which from this moment passes
over their relations to the conquered people. Till
now, as we have seen, the war between Englishmen
and Welshmen had been a war of extermination.
Eastward of the line which the English sword had
drawn across the island no trace was left of Roman
or of British life ; and westward of it, in the half
of Britain that still remained unconquered, there was
no thought of submission to or intercourse with the
conquerors. The force of the Roman past was seen
in the attitude which the Britons preserved towards
their English assailants. In our anxiety to know more
of our fathers, we listen to the monotonous plaint of

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617.

Gildas with a strange disappointment. Gildas must
have witnessed much of the invasion ;[1] but we look
in vain through his book for any account of the life
or settlement of Saxon or Engle or Jute. He tells us
nothing of their fortunes or of their leaders. A new
people was growing up in the conquered half of Britain,
but across the border of this new people Gildas gives
us but a glimpse, doubtless he had but a glimpse
himself, of forsaken walls, of shrines polluted with
heathen impiety. His silence and ignorance mark
the character which the struggle preserved up to
the close of the sixth century. The Briton had been
driven by the sword from much of British soil. But,
beaten as he was, he yet remained unconquered. No
British neck had as yet bowed in willing slavery
before the English invader ; and the provincials still
looked down on their assailants with the scorn with
which Rome had looked down on them in the very
height of its power. They still held the struggle to
be one of civilization against barbarism. To the
Britons the English invaders remained " barbarians,"
" wolves," " dogs," " whelps from the kennel of
barbarism," " hateful to God and to man."[2] Their
victories were accepted as triumphs of the power of
evil, as chastisements of a divine justice for national
sin. But their ravage, terrible as it was, was held to
be almost at an end ; in another century, so ran Welsh

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[1] His work dates from about 560, but he had quitted Britain
some thirty years before.

[2] Gildas, Hist. 23 : "ferocissimi illi nefandi nominis Saxones,
Deo hominibusque invisi, quasi in caulas lupi . . . . grex catu-
lorum de cubili leænæ barbariæ . . . . canum catastam."

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Beino.

prophecies, their last hold on the land would be shaken off.

Legend, if it distorts facts, preserves accurately enough the impressions of a vanished time ; and in the legend of St. Beino we catch a glimpse of the chasm that parted the two races at this period. Beino had settled with some monkish followers in a solitary retreat in the west of our Herefordshire. " And on a certain day, as Beino was travelling near the river Severn, where was a ford, lo ! he heard a voice on the other side of the river, inciting dogs to hunt a hare ; the voice being that of a Saxon who spoke as loud as he could ' Cirgia ' (charge), which in that language incited the dogs. And when Beino heard the voice of the Saxon, he immediately returned, and coming to his disciples said to them, ' My sons, put on your clothes and your shoes, and let us leave this place, for the nation of this man has a strange language, and is abominable, and I heard his voice on the other side of the river inciting the dogs after a hare. They have invaded this place and it will be theirs, and they will keep it in their possession.' And then Beino said to one of his disciples, Bithylint was his name, ' My son,' said he, ' be obedient to me ; I wish that thou wilt remain here. My blessing shall be with thee. And the cross which I have made I will leave with thee.' And the blessing of Beino bound that disciple and he remained there. And Beino and his disciples came as far as Meivon, and there he remained with Tysilio forty days and forty nights. And from thence he came to King Cynan, son of Brochwel, and he requested a place to pray for

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End of
extermination
of Britons.

his soul, and that of his friends. And the king gave to him Gwydelwerum, in Merionethshire." [1]

But with the battle of Deorham this absolute severance between the one race and the other comes almost suddenly to an end. In a few years we find the Welshmen of the west in alliance with and even fighting by the side of their assailants of the east. It is possible that its British inhabitants had never been driven from the soil which Ceawlin won in the lower Severn valley; it was at any rate but a short while after their settlement that the West-Saxon settlers in this district were leagued with the Welsh for the overthrow of Ceawlin. Such a league took a yet more marked form when Penda and the Englishmen of Mid-Britain marched side by side with Welshmen in their attack on Northumbria. Junctions such as these show that the older wars of extermination had come to an end, and that the hostility of the two races was henceforth to sink down into the common hostility of neighbouring peoples. But we have more direct proof that the Britons were no longer driven from the soil by their assailants in the conquests which the Northumbrian King Æthelfrith was soon to win from the Britons of Strathclyde. "He wasted the race of the Britons more than any chieftain of the English had done," says Bæda, "for none drove out or subdued so many of the natives or won so much of their land for English settlement, or made so many

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[1] "Lives of Cambro. British Saints," by Rev. W. J. Rees, p. 301. The Welsh text is given at p. 15. Like most of the Welsh hagiographies, Beino's life in its present form is of the twelfth century, but like its fellows it is clearly founded on old materials.

tributary to Englishmen." [1] The policy of accepting
the submission and tribute of the Welsh, but of
leaving them on the conquered soil, became, indeed,
from this moment the invariable policy of the in-
vaders ; and as the invasion pushed further and
further to the west an ever-growing proportion of the
Britons remained mingled with the conquerors. We
see this strongly brought out in one of these western
districts. By a long series of victories, a series spread-
ing over the space of a hundred and thirty years, the
West-Saxons at last became masters of the country
which now bears the name of Somerset, the land of
the Somer-sætas. Each successive wave of invasion
has left its mark in the local names of the district
over which it passed ; and the varying proportion of
these to the Celtic or other non-English names around
them throws some light on the varying character of
the conquest. We may take as a rough index the
well known English termination " ton." North of
Mendip—in the country which had been won in the
early days of West-Saxon invasion—this bears to all
other names the proportion of about a third. Between
Mendip and the Parrett, in the conquests of Centwine,
it reaches only a fourth. Across the Parrett, but east
of the road from Watchet to Wellington, the propor-
tion decreases to a fifth ; and westward of this it
becomes rapidly rarer, and varies in different districts
from an eighth to a tenth. In other words the British
population, which had withdrawn before the sword of
Ceawlin, rested in quiet subjection beneath the sword
of Ine. The change is yet more strongly marked by

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 34.

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*Change in
relations of
conquerors.*

Ine's laws. In these the Briton is recognised as a subject of the State and as entitled to claim legal protection for life and limb.

But the battle of Deorham marked more than a change in the relation of the conquered to the conquerors. It marks a change in the relations of the conquerors themselves. From this moment the strife of Englishman and Briton, though far from having reached its close, sinks into comparative unimportance ; and what plays the first part in English politics for the next two hundred years is the strife of Englishman with Englishman. However wearisome such a strife may seem, it was of vital import to the after history of the country, for it was only by hard fighting that the relative weight of the conquering peoples could be determined, and a centre of supremacy established round which the various tribes that had shared in the winning of Britain could gather into a nation. Till now no national idea had shown itself in the new England. All the kingdoms which had been built up by the invaders stood on a footing of equality. All had taken an independent share in the work of conquest. Although the oneness of a common blood and a common speech was everywhere recognised, we find no traces of any common action or common rule. Even in the two groups of kingdoms, the Engle and the Saxon kingdoms which occupied Britain south of the Humber, the relations of each member of the group to its fellow-members seem to have been merely local ; it was only locally that East and West and South English were being grouped at this time round the

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Middle English of Leicester, or that the East and West and South Saxons had been grouped round the Middle Saxons about London. In neither instance do we find any real trace of a confederacy, or of the rule of one member of the group over the others; while north of the Humber the feeling between the Engle of Yorkshire and the Engle who had settled towards the Firth of Forth was a feeling of hostility rather than friendship. But with the conquests of Ceawlin this age of isolation, of equality, of independence, came to an end. The progress of the conquest had in fact drawn a sharp line between the kingdoms of the conquerors. The work of half of them was done. In the south of the island not only Kent, but Sussex, Essex, and Middlesex, were surrounded by English territory, and hindered by that single fact from all further growth. In central Britain the same fate necessarily befell the East-English, the South-English, and the Middle-English. The West-Saxons, on the other hand, and the West-English or Mercians, still remained free to conquer and expand on the south of the Humber, as the Englishmen of Deira and Bernicia remained free to the north of that river. It was plain therefore that from this moment the growth and strength of these powers would throw their fellow kingdoms into the background, and that with an ever-growing inequality of power must come a new arrangement of political forces. The greater kingdoms would in the end be drawn to subject and absorb the lesser ones, and to the war between Englishman and Briton would be added a struggle between Englishman and Englishman.

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*The
West-
Saxon
State.*

It was through this struggle, and the establishment of a lordship on the part of the stronger and growing states over their weaker and stationary fellows in which it resulted, that the English kingdoms were to make their first step towards union in a single England ; and from the time we have reached the struggle became inevitable.   Masters of the larger and richer portion of the land, the invaders were no longer drawn irresistibly westward by the hope of plunder, while the severance of the British kingdoms lightened the pressure of a common danger from without.   Greed and terror alike ceased to hold the invaders together, and Saxon and Engle turned from the work of conquest to fight for lordship over the land they had won.   At the moment of Ceawlin's victory such a lordship seemed to fall necessarily to the lot of Wessex.   No king could vie as a conqueror with the king who had fought and won at Barbury Hill, at Wimbledon, and at Deorham.[1]   None of its fellow kingdoms seemed likely to hold their own against a state that stretched from the Channel to the Ouse and from the Chilterns to the mouth of the Severn.   Only one success more, in fact, was needed to raise such a power into supremacy over the whole English people.   A march on the upper Severn

[1] At Barbury Hill Ceawlin had shared the victory with Cynric (Engl. Chron. a. 556).   The victory at Bedford had been won by his brother Cuthwulf.   It is this commanding position of Ceawlin that Bæda marks in setting him in the list of those who exercised an " imperium " over other Englishmen ; Ælla of the South-Saxons, Ceawlin, Æthelberht of Kent, Rædwald of East-Anglia, and the Northumbrian kings, Eadwine, Oswald, and Oswiu.   (Bæda, H. E. ii. c. 5.)   But see postea, p. 306, *note.*

BRITAIN IN 580.

Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

S. of Clyde

BERNICIANS

Cumbrians

DEIRANS

Chester

LINDIS WARA

Sub Engle

West Engle or Mercians

Middle Engle

North Gyrwas

North Folk

EAST ENGLE

South Folk

W. Wyr...

Hwicca

South Engle

S. Gyrwas

EAST SAXONS

Middle Sexe

WEST SAXONS

Defnham

Surrey

KENT

Wil-saetan

Selwood

SOUTH SAXONS

North Welsh

West Wales

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valley and the winning of Chester would utterly
crush the resistance of the Britons ; for it would cut
off the Cumbrians from the central districts of our
Wales, as Deorham had already cut off the Welsh
of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, and thus break
what had been Britain into three isolated districts
which could oppose no common or national resistance
to their assailants.   But the result of such a conquest
would be almost as decisive on the political aspect of
the new England itself.   With a border that stretched
from the Fens round to the head-waters of the Trent
the pressure of the West-Saxons on central Britain
would have been irresistible.   The scattered settlers
who were dotted over Northamptonshire, the invaders
who were hardly camped along the basin of the Trent,
the peoples of the eastern coast from the Humber
to the Thames, would have been powerless to resist
Ceawlin's supremacy, while the strength of the Deirans
and of the Bernicians was being drained at this crisis
by a long and obstinate war which these tribes were
waging against one another in the border-lands of
the Wear.   Neither to the south nor to the north of
the Humber was there any state save Kent that
could have withstood the West-Saxons ; and, alone,
even Kent could not have held its own.

Uriconium.   We can hardly doubt that it was the sense of these
issues that drew Ceawlin to push, in 583, only six
years after his victory at Deorham, up the course of
the Severn.   Marching through the forest-belt that
stretched from Arden across the north of our
Worcestershire, a belt whose fragments preserve the
name of the forest of Wyre, the King reached

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Uriconium,[1] a town whose name we recognize in its district of the " Wrekin," and whose ruins have been recently brought to light. The town was strongly placed at the base of the Wrekin, not far from the bank of Severn, and was of great extent. Its walls inclosed a space more than double that of Roman London, while the remains of its forum, its theatre, and its amphitheatre, as well as the broad streets which contrast so strangely with the narrow alleys of other British towns,[2] show its wealth and importance. But with its storm by the West-Saxons the very existence of the city came to an end. Its ruins show that the place was plundered and burned, while the bones which lie scattered among them tell their tale of the flight and massacre of its inhabitants, of women and children hewn down in the streets, and wretched fugitives stifled in the hypocausts whither they had fled with their little hoards for shelter.[3] A British poet in verses still left to us sings piteously the death-song of Uriconium, " the white town in the valley," the town of white stones gleaming among the green woodlands. The torch of the foe had left

[1] For a translation of Llywarch Hen's elegy on Kyndylan, a discussion of its historical relation to this inroad, and an identification of its " Tren " with Uriconium, see Guest, " Conquest of Severn Valley " (" Archæol. Journ." vol. xix.), pp. 199-215. For the ruins of Uriconium, see Wright, " Guide to Uriconium, 1859." On one wall were found two lines scrawled in the plaster, which would have been invaluable for a knowledge of Roman Britain. Unluckily they were destroyed, but it is noteworthy that they were in Latin. (Ibid. p. 46.)

[2] Wright, " Uriconium," p. 48.

[3] Wright, " Uriconium," pp. 40, 41.

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it when he sang a heap of blackened ruins where
the singer wandered through halls he had known
in happier days, the halls of its chief Kyndylan,
"without fire, without light, without song," their
stillness broken only by the eagle's scream, the eagle
"who has swallowed fresh drink, heart's blood of
Kyndylan the fair."

*Defeat of
Faddiley.*

But with the fall of Uriconium, the firing of Pen-
gwyrn,[1] in its loop of the upper Severn, and the
wreck of "Bassa's churches," perhaps a group of
small chapels such as we still find at Glendalough,
and which may have left their name to the little
village of Baschurch,[2] the success of the West-Saxons
reached its close.   From this point the aim of their
raid must have been Chester; but as Ceawlin pushed
from Uriconium up the Severn to the head-waters of
the Weaver, he was met at a spot called Faddiley,[3] on
what was possibly the border of the city territory,
as it is still that of our Cheshire, by a British force
which had gathered under Brocmael, a chieftain
whose dominion may have roughly answered to the
later Powys.[4]   From the "wrath" with which Ceawlin
fell back into his own country, as well as the events
that followed, the battle must have ended in a

[1] Pengwyrn occupied the site of our Shrewsbury.

[2] See Llywarch Hen's elegy, "Pengwyrn's palace: is it not
in flames," and for Bassa, vv. 46-51.   (Guest, "Conquest of
Severn Valley," pp. 204-9.)   Baschurch lies to the north of
Shrewsbury.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 584.   For the identity of its "Fethan-Leag"
with Faddiley, see Guest, "Conquest of Severn Valley," p. 196-9.
It is some three miles west of Nantwich.

[4] Guest, "Conq. of Severn Valley," 215.

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terrible defeat of the Gewissas. The blow proved fatal to the power of Wessex. Not only was the upper Severn valley lost as quickly as it had been won ;[1] but the loss was followed by a rising of those Gewissas, the Hwiccas as they were called, who had settled in the newly conquered country along the lower Severn ;[2] and who now took for their king Ceol or Ceolric,[3] the son of Cutha, a brother of Ceawlin who had fallen in the rout at Faddiley.[4]

With the rising of the Hwiccas began a struggle for the throne between the lines of Cutha and Ceawlin which broke the strength of Wessex for more than two hundred years. The first encounter indeed between the two houses showed how thoroughly the kingdom was rent in twain. The revolt in the Severn valley had thrown Ceawlin back on the older Wessex ; and it is there that when Ceolric marched to attack him in 591 we find the king

Battle of Wanborough.

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[1] I am afraid I differ here from Dr. Guest and Mr. Freeman. But the point seems clear when we compare the lower with the upper valley of the Severn. Both in later days became Mercian ground. But the country of the Hwiccas retains to this day its West-Saxon dialect, while north of the Forest of Wyre the tongue is Mercian. Had this upper district been a West-Saxon settlement conquered by Mercians, I see no reason why its dialect should have differed from that of the West-Saxon lands conquered by Mercia on the lower Severn.

[2] I gather this from the point at which Ceawlin takes post against the rebels, as well as from their junction with "Britons" against him. See postea.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 590. Malmesbury (G. R. i. sec. 17) identifies its "Ceol" with Ceolric.

[4] Engl. Chron. c. 584, "There was Cutha slain."

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encamped at Wanborough,[1] on the brink of the Wilt-
shire Downs, where their steep escarpment rears
itself above the Vale of White Horse. The height
was no doubt crowned with the mound or barrow
from which its name is drawn, the barrow of Woden,
the god from whom the kings of Wessex believed
their race to spring ; and its sacred character may
have backed its advantages as a military position.
For Wanborough was the key of Ceawlin's shrunken
realm.[2] So long as he held the post, the old king
could communicate by Roman roads with Winchester
and Old Sarum ; another road ran by Silchester to
the regions south of Thames which he had won at
Wimbledon ; while reinforcements from the district
of the Four Towns could reach him by the Icknield
Way which ran along the edge of the downs on
which he stood. It was this that made his overthrow
a decisive one. After a terrible slaughter the day
went against Ceawlin ;[3] he was driven from his
realm, and perished two years after, it may be in
some effort to regain his throne.[4] The battle of
Wanborough marks, as we have seen, a new stage

[1] Engl. Chron, a. 591. Guest (Welsh and English in Somer-
set, Archæol. Journ. xvi. 106, 107) fixes this " Wodnes beorge "
at Wanborough. Malmesbury (G. R. i. 17) attributes the rising
to the hatred felt towards Ceawlin (" quia enim in odium sui
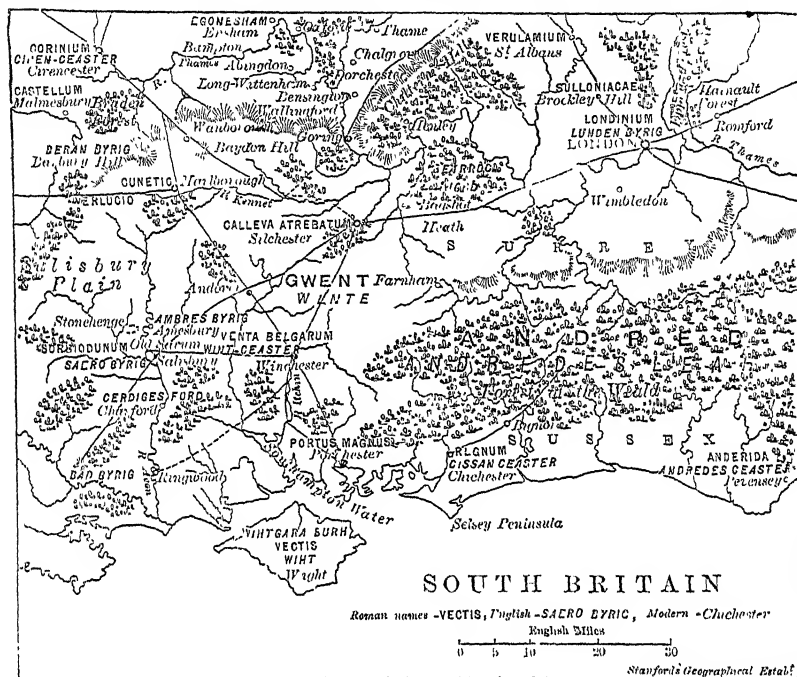quasi classicum utrobique cecinerat "), but does not give its
causes.

[2] Guest, " Welsh and English in Somerset," Archæol, Journ.
xvi. 107.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 591. " There was great slaughter at Wan-
borough, and Ceawlin was driven out."

[4] Engl. Chron. a. 593.

in the relations of Welshmen and Englishmen. At
Faddiley the Britons had reappeared on the scene of
our history as a vigorous fighting power. At Wan-
borough, it was their junction with the Hwiccas that
struck down Ceawlin, for Britons marched side by side
with the Hwiccas in the host of Ceolric.[1] But the
battle marks no less a new stage in the history of the

SOUTH BRITAIN

Roman names -VECTIS, English -SACRO BYRIG, Modern -Chichester

English Miles

0   5   10   20   30

Stanford's Geographical Estab.t

West-Saxons. The house of Cutha, which this alliance
had seated on the throne,[2] had at once to pay the
price of a policy which had brought the Welshmen

[1] Malmesbury (G. R. i. sec. 17), "Conspirantibus tam Anglis
quam Britonibus apud Wodnesdic cæso exercitu."

[2] It retained it till 685, when Ceawlin's line again recovered
the kingdom under Cædwalla and Ine, and, after a fresh interrup-
tion, finally made it its own in Ecgberht.

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into Wessex. After a few years Ceolric was succeeded by his brother Ceolwulf; [1] but the reign of Ceolwulf was one long fight with Englishmen and Britons; and it was while Wessex was thus battling for very life that the primacy among the conquerors was suddenly seized by a rival whom she had struck down some thirty years before.

Æthelberht of Kent.
The effort of the Kentishmen to break out of their narrow bounds had been foiled by Ceawlin at Wimbledon : and their boy-king had fallen back on his petty realm only to watch the rise of his conqueror to a yet greater power over Britain. But Æthelberht had never ceased to aim at a wider sway; and his ambition may have been quickened by a marriage that linked him with one of the greatest states of the Continent. From its geographical position as well as its long peace, it was natural that Kent should be the first of the English states to renew that intercourse with the body of Western Christendom which had been broken by the conquest of the Saxon Shore. In the reign of the Emperor Justinian, at some time therefore between 527 and 565 (or shortly before Æthelberht's accession), " men of the English " had been sent with his own envoys by one of the Frankish kings of Gaul to Constantinople ; and their presence at the Imperial Court was welcomed there as a proof that the island of Britain still owned the rule of the Cæsars. [2] We can hardly doubt from the

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 597. " He fought and contended incessantly with Angel-cyn, or with Walas, or with Peohtas, or with Scottas." I cannot explain the appearance here of " Picts and Scots."

[2] Procopius, De Bell. Goth. iv. 20. Freeman, " Norman Conquest," i. 30.

date of this visit that these Englishmen were men
of the Cantwara, the one English folk which was
fairly settled in Britain at so early a time ; while their
presence in the train of these Frankish envoys points
to some recognition by the Kentishmen of the supre-
macy of their Frankish neighbours, whose power
must have seemed overwhelming at this time to the
struggling invaders of Britain.   Such a connexion
would at any rate explain the marriage of Æthelberht
with Bertha, a daughter of the Frankish king, Chari-
bert.[1]   The marriage was in itself a significant one.
If, as seems probable, it took place in the years that
immediately followed the battle of Faddiley,[2] it may
have marked the awakening of larger aims in the
Kentish king as he saw the great obstacle to his
ambition crumble into ruin.   Nor was it less import-
ant in its results : for it not only linked the fortunes
of the new England with those of the German states
which were growing up upon the wreck of Roman
Gaul,[3] but was fated in the end to knit her again to
the general fortunes of Western Christendom.

[1] Greg. Turon. Hist. Eccl. lib. iv. c. 26.

[2] Æthelberht's marriage lies, of course, between the battle of
Wimbledon and Augustine's arrival (568-595).   Bertha's father,
Charibert, became king in 561, and as Bertha seems to have been
born soon after her father's accession (Greg. Turon. lib. iv. c. 21),
the marriage, assuming her to be about twenty when it took
place, lies at about 583, or a little later.   It may have followed
Fethanlea in 584.   Professor Stubbs (Dict. Christ. Biogr. i. 316)
thinks it was probably after the death of her mother, Ingoberg,
in 589.   (Greg. Turon. Hist. Eccl. lib. ix. c. 26.)

[3] The connexion with Frankish Gaul, however, cannot have
been a very close one, for Gregory of Tours (Hist. Eccl. lib. ix.

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Canterbury.

The home to which Æthelberht brought his Frankish wife was the first Teutonic town which we know to have arisen on the soil of the new England. Its conquerors had hitherto followed the bent of their race in leaving the cities they had won to ruin and to solitude, and in settling in " tun " or " thorpe " in the country about them. But by Æthelberht's day the Kentish kings had fixed one of their homes just outside the north-eastern wall of Durovernum ; and some of the Cantwara had drawn into a little " byryg " or borough round the dwelling of their king. From this first Cantwara-byryg, or Canterbury, they crept forward over the site of the ruined town. How utter a wreck Durovernum had become in the century since its fall, we see by comparing the ground-plan of the Roman city with that of the city which thus sprung up on its site. Though the continued existence of its Roman walls forced the settlers to build their houses in lines that led, like those of the Roman burghers, from gate to gate, yet the line of these thoroughfares was not adjusted to that of the Roman streets, nor were the sites of the Roman houses taken from those of the later dwellings. The wreck of the Roman houses indeed is found buried so deep beneath the soil of the English Canterbury that they must have sunk into ruins long before the Cantwara found a home in Durovernum. Even then it was very gradually that the new borough crept forward from the king's " tun " over the site of its predecessor ; and the dedications of its churches, marking as they do the date of the

c. 26) speaks of Bertha as married by " in Cantiâ regis cujusdam filius," whose name he clearly did not know.

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_Æthelberht's
supremacy._

parishes in which they were raised, show that the whole area within the walls was not filled up till the days of Dunstan and Edgar.[1]

But even the stimulus of Bertha's marriage could hardly have spurred Æthelberht to a renewal of his efforts, had not the sudden ruin of Wessex left the field open to his arms. British soil indeed there was no longer any that he could win ; but about him lay English neighbours who might be forced to own his supremacy. We know nothing of the marches or battles by which the Kentish king asserted his sway ; but, in the six years that followed the battle of Wanborough, Æthelberht raised Kent into one of the great powers of Britain.[2] Even in Wessex his power was owned as that of a neighbour whose safe-conduct was sufficient to protect men in passing through the very heart of Ceolwulf's realm.[3] But elsewhere he bowed his neighbours more directly under his sway. Even the South-Saxons were not sheltered by their screen of woodland and fen from the grasp of the conqueror.[4] But across the Thames Æthelberht found an easier prey ; and in 597 his " empire," to use Bæda's word, already spread along the eastern coast as far as to the banks of the Humber.[5] He was overlord of

[1] See Fausset's " Canterbury before Domesday," Archæol. Journ. vol. xxxii.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 5) shows that his supremacy was established by 597.

[3] Bæda H. E. ii. 2. " Adjutorio usus Ædelbercti regis convocavit (Augustinus) ad suum colloquium episcopos sive doctores proximæ Brittonum provinciæ . . . in confinio Hwicciorum et Occidentalium Saxonum."

[4] Malm. Gest. Pontif. (Script. post. Bæd. p. 133).

[5] Bæda, H. E. i. 25. " Ad confinium usque Humbræ fluminis

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the East-Saxons, whose king was wedded to his
sister Ricula.[1] The East-Saxon kingdom, it must be
remembered, comprised Hertfordshire and Middlesex
as well as Essex itself ; and London also passed under
his sway with the men who had so recently won it.[2]
Northward of the Colne his supremacy extended not
only over the East-Anglians under their king Ræd-
wald, but " over all the countries of the Southern-
Engle which are parted from the Engle of the North
by the Humber, and by the border-lands in the
neighbourhood of the Humber."[3] His border-line
thus ran along the Humber and across the great
swamp of the Trent to Sherwood, across the valleys
of the Derwent and the Dove by Needwood to the
water-parting which formed the "march" of the
Mercians, then bending round through Arden it
followed the western and southern borders of North-
amptonshire to the borders of the Gyrwas beside
Huntingdon, and struck by the Devil's Dyke and the
great woodlands to the western part of Hertfordshire,
to the Thames, to Sussex, and the sea.

*English
slaves at
Rome.*

That this supremacy of Æthelberht was no mere
accident, but the result of forces which were acting

maximi, quo meridiani et septentrionales Anglorum populi di-
rimuntur, fines imperii tetenderat."

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. "In qua gente Saberct, nepos Ædelbercti
ex sorore Riculà, regnabat." Sledda was Saberct's father (Florence
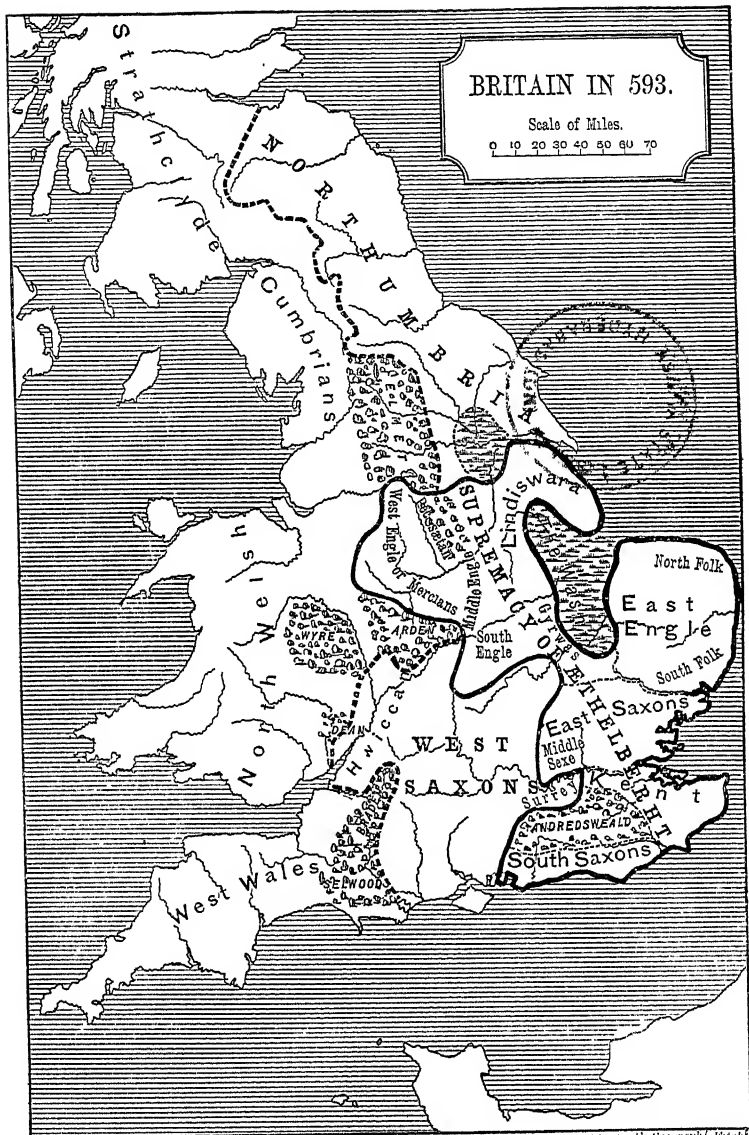of Worcester, ed. Thorpe. Geneal. app. ad vol. i. 250).

[2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. "Fecit rex Ædelberctus in civitate
Lundonia ecclesiam."

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 5. "*Cunctis* australibus eorum (Anglorum)
provinciis quæ Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis seques-
trantur a borealibus imperavit."

BRITAIN IN 593.

Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

NORTHUMBRI

Cumbrians

Lindiswaras

North Wales

SUPREMACY OF ETHELBERHT

West Engle or Mercians

ARDEN

South Engle

East Engle

North Folk

South Folk

WYRE

HWICCAS

East Saxons

South Folk

DEAN

Middle Sexe

WEST SAXONS

Surrey

ANDREDSWEALD

West Wales

SELWOOD

South Saxons

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universally throughout the new England, is seen in the fact that the years in which it was built up saw the rise of a power hardly inferior to that of Kent on the north of the Humber. Under the rule of their king Ælla, the Engle of Deira are said not only to have made themselves masters of the country from the Humber to the Wear, but to have taken advantage of the discord in Bernicia to assert a supremacy over their fellow Engle to the north.[1] If this were so, we find the origin of a struggle between the two peoples in Ælla's old age which filled the foreign slave markets with English slaves.[2] Nothing marks more strongly the chasm of thought and feeling that in spite of oneness in tongue, blood, and religion, still parted the English tribes from one another than the cruel usages of their warfare. A war between two English peoples was carried on with all the ruthlessness of a war between strangers. It was purely at his captor's will that ransom saved the noble taken in battle from the doom of death. Slavery alone saved from death a captive of meaner rank. At a far later time than this, when the influence of Christianity had done much to soften

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[1] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 155-6.

[2] The date of Gregory's meeting with the English slaves at Rome is fixed between 585 and 588 by the fact that after his long stay at Constantinople he returned to Rome in 585 or 586 (Pelagius wrote to him at Constantinople in October 584, while a letter of Pelagius to Elias in 586 is said to have been composed by Gregory at Rome). On the other hand, Ælla, whom the slaves owned as their king, died in 588.

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English manners, the slaying of prisoners in cold blood or their sale in foreign slave markets remained a common matter.[1] One of the most memorable stories in our history shows us a group of such slaves, taken in this war between the ·Bernicians and Deirans, as they stood in the market-place at Rome, it may be the great Forum of Trajan which still in its decay recalled the glories of the Imperial City. Their white bodies, their fair faces, their golden hair, were noted by a Roman deacon who passed by.[2] " From what country do these slaves come ? " Gregory asked the trader who brought them. The slave-dealer answered, " They are English " (or as the word ran in the Latin form it would bear at Rome) " they are Angles." The deacon's pity vented itself in poetic humour. " Not angles but Angels," he said, " with faces so angel-like." " From what country come they ? " " They come," said the merchant, " from Deira." " De ira," was the untranslatable word-play of the vivacious Roman, " ay, plucked from God's ire and called to Christ's mercy ! And what is the name of their king ? " They told him "Ælla ; " and Gregory again seized on this word as of good omen. " Alleluia shall be sung in Ælla's land," he said, and passed on

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[1] See the tale in Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 22.

[2] Such was his actual position in the Roman hierarchy, but ·Gregory was already the virtual director of the Papacy. He was, in fact, one of the seven " regionary deacons" of Rome, had been despatched by the Popes Benedict I. and Pelagius II. as their envoy for some years at the Imperial Court of Constantinople, and in a more personal capacity was Abbot of the religious house he had founded on the Cælian.

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*Creation of
Northumbria.*

musing how the "angel-faces" should be brought to sing it.[1]

While Gregory was thus playing with Ælla's name the old king passed away; and with his death in 588 the strength of Deira seems suddenly to have broken down.[2] As the Bernician king, Æthelric, entered Deira in triumph the children of Ælla fled over its western border, while their land passed under the lordship of its conqueror. It was from the union of the two realms which his inroad and rule brought about that a new kingdom sprang which embraced them both, the kingdom of the Northumbrians. The supremacy of Æthelric was thus of a closer and more direct sort than that of Æthelberht; for while the Kentish king was content to rule over people who retained their own kingly stock and political unity, the king of Bernicia was striving to establish a direct rule over Deiran as well as Bernician, and to blend the political life of both peoples into a single realm. Different however as the character of the two lordships might be, they were parts of the same movement towards a larger unity; and with their rise the aspect of the conquered Britain was suddenly changed. Instead of a chaos of isolated peoples, its conquerors were gathered into three great groups, whose existence remained the key to the history of the country during the next two hundred years. The kingdom of the north had reached what remained its final limits from the Forth to the Humber. The southern kingdom of the West-Saxons

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 1.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 588. For the chronology of these events, see Hussey's edition of Bæda, H. E. p. 99, note.

stretched from the line of Watling Street to the coast CHAP. V.
of the Channel.   And between these was already The Strife of the
roughly sketched out the great kingdom of Mid- Conquerors.
Britain, which, however its limits might vary in this 577-617.
quarter or that, retained a substantial identity both
of character and of area from the days of Æthelberht
to the final fall of the Mercian kings.

When Æthelfrith, on the death of Æthelric, became *Augustine.*
king of Northumbria, in 593, this threefold division of
Britain must have been fairly established; and of its
three powers that of Æthelberht was the widest and
the most important.   The fame of it indeed crossed
the seas, and woke to fresh life the mission pro-
jects which had never ceased to stir in the mind of
Gregory from the day when he pitied the English
slaves in the market-place of Rome.   Only three or
four years after his converse with them in the Forum
Gregory became bishop of the Imperial city,[1] and
thus found himself in a position to carry out his
dream of winning back Britain to the faith.   The
marriage of Bertha with the Kentish king, and the
rule which Æthelberht had since established over
a large part of the island, afforded him the opening
he sought; and after cautious negotiation with the
Frankish rulers of Gaul[2] who promised to guard his
missionaries on their way, and to provide them with
interpreters, Gregory sent a Roman abbot, Augustine,
at the head of a band of monks to preach the Gospel
to the English people.   The missionaries landed in
597 on the spot where Hengest had landed more

[1] In 590.
[2] Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 10.

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than a century before in the isle of Thanet; and the interpreters whom they had chosen among the Franks were at once sent to the king with news of their arrival, as well as with promises of things strange to his ears, of joys without end and a kingdom for ever in heaven.

His arrival in Kent.

Æthelberht cannot have been taken by surprise. He had married Bertha on the condition that she should remain a Christian; her chaplain, Bishop Liudhard, formed a part of the Kentish court; and a ruined church, now known as that of St. Martin, outside the new Canterbury had been given him for his worship. Negotiations with Bertha and with the king himself had probably preceded the landing of Augustine; and after a few days' delay Æthelberht crossed into Thanet to confer with the new comers. They found him sitting in the open air on the chalk down above Minster,[1] where the eye nowadays catches miles away over the marshes the dim tower of Canterbury; and the king listened patiently to the sermon of Augustine as the interpreters whom the abbot had brought with him rendered it in the English tongue. "Your words are fair," he answered at last with English good sense; "but they are new and of doubtful meaning." For himself, he said, he refused to forsake the gods of his fathers; but with the usual religious tolerance of the German race he promised shelter and protection to the strangers within his own king's tun. The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, and singing in concert the strains

[1] For fear of magic: Bæda, H. E. i. 25.

of the litany of their Church. "Turn from this city,
O Lord," they sang, "Thine anger and wrath, and
turn it from Thy holy house, for we have sinned."
And then in strange contrast came the jubilant cry of
the older Hebrew worship—the cry which Gregory
had wrested in prophetic earnestness from the name
of the Yorkshire king in the Roman market-place,
" Alleluia." [1]

It was thus that the spot which witnessed the
landing of Hengest became yet better known as the
landing-place of Augustine. But the second landing
at Ebbsfleet was in no small measure a reversal and
undoing of the first. " Strangers from Rome" [2] was
the title with which the missionaries first fronted the
English king. The march of the monks as they
chanted their solemn litany was in one sense a return
of the Roman legions who withdrew at the trumpet-
call of Alaric. It was to the tongue and the thought
not of Gregory only but of the men whom his own
Jutish fathers had slaughtered and driven over sea
that Æthelberht listened in the preaching of Augus-
tine. Canterbury, the earliest city-centre of the new
England,[3] became the centre of Latin influence. The
Roman tongue became again one of the tongues of
Britain, the language of its worship, its correspond-
ence, its literature. But more than the tongue of
Rome returned with Augustine. Practically his

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

[2] " Mittens ad Ædelberctum (Augustinus) mandavit se venisse
de Româ."—Bæda, H. E. i. c. 25.

[3] " Dedit eis mansionem in civitate Durovernensi, quæ imperii
sui totius erat metropolis."—Bæda, H. E. i. 25.

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landing renewed that union with the Western World
which the landing of Hengest had all but destroyed.
The new England was admitted into the older common-
wealth of nations.   The civilization, arts, letters, which
had fled before the sword of the English conquerors
returned with the Christian faith.   The fabric of the
Roman law indeed never took root in England, but it
is impossible not to recognize the influence of the
Roman missionaries in the fact that codes of the
customary English law began to be put into writing
soon after their arrival.[1]   Of yet greater import was
the weight which the new faith was to exercise on the
drift of the English towards national unity.   It was
impossible for England to become Christian without
seeing itself organized and knit together into a single
life by its Christian organization, without seeing a great
national fabric of religious order rise up in the face of
its civil disorder.

*Gregory's
plans.*

As yet however these issues of the new faith were
still distant.   For some years indeed after the landing
of the missionaries on the shores of Thanet, there
was little to promise any extension of Christianity
beyond the limits of Kent.   After a short time
indeed Æthelberht listened to the preaching of the
missionaries,[2] and thousands of Kentish men crowded

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[1] Æthelberht's laws are the first written code we possess.
"Qui inter cætera bona, quæ genti suæ consulendo conferebat,
etiam decreta illi judiciorum, juxta exempla Romanorum, cum
consilio sapientium constituit; quæ conscripta Anglorum ser-
mone hactenus habentur et observantur ab ea."—Bæda, H. E. lib.
ii. c. 5.

[2] Bæda, H. E. i. 26.   His conversion seems to have been in the
year of Augustine's landing, 597 ; cf. Bæda, H. E. ii. 5.

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to baptism in the train of their chief.[1] Augustine, who had as yet used Bertha's church of St. Martin for his worship,[2] now received from the king the gift of another ruined church beside the city as the seat of his bishoprick, and founded there the " Christ Church" which still remains the metropolitan church of the English Communion ; while to the eastward of Canterbury rose an abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, the patron saints of his own Rome, in which Augustine and his successors sate as abbots, and where the Kentish kings found from that time a burial-place. But if the conversion of Kent satisfied the zeal of Augustine, it was far from satisfying the larger aims of Pope Gregory. Four years after the reception of his missionaries it seemed to the Roman bishop that the time had come for widening the little church in Kent into a church of Britain ; and in 601 fresh envoys from Rome brought with them a plan for the ecclesiastical organization of the whole island.[3] It was characteristic of the conservative temper of the Roman chancery, as well as a proof of the utter ignorance of the country which prevailed across the Channel, that the plan was drafted on the model of Britain as it had existed under the Romans, and took no count of the changes which had been wrought by its conquest. In Roman Britain, London and York had been the

[1] Gregory, writing in 598, rejoices that at the past Christmas "plus quam decem millia Angli ab eodem nunciati sunt fratre (Augustino) et coepiscopo nostro baptizari."—Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," iii. p. 12.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 26.

[3] See the letter—as dated—in Bæda, H. E. i. 29.

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leading cities; and it was London and York that
Gregory took as the new ecclesiastical centres of the
island. Augustine was to be Bishop of London, with
twelve suffragans in the south. He was to send
another bishop to York, who, as soon as Northern
Britain became Christian, was in turn to ordain
twelve suffragans for himself, and to be of equal rank
with Augustine's successors. Time was to modify
this programme; but its very existence was signifi-
cant. It was plain that, if Britain became Christian,
its conversion to the new faith would bring with it a
new organization of the whole country; and that the
form which its religious life must assume would lead
to a reconstruction of the forms which its civil life
had hitherto taken.

*The
Britons*

But, urgent as was Gregory's appeal, Æthelberht
was slow to use his overlordship as a means of forcing
the peoples beneath his sway to bow to the new faith
which he and his people had embraced. Even Augus-
tine seems for the moment to have preferred the easier
enterprise—as it seemed—of placing the Kentish
church in connexion with the Christianity which, as
he had by this time learned, existed in the west of
Britain. His journey "with the aid of King Æthel-
berht" across the territory of the West-Saxons to the
border-line of the Hwiccas,[1] and the conference with

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. ii. The place of conference was "in
confinio Hwicciorum et occidentalium Saxonum." It is generally
put at Aust Passage on the Severn; but if these words, as I
believe, are rightly rendered, "on the border *between* the
Hwiccas and West-Saxons," this is out of the question; and we
must look rather to some such place as the later Malmesbury, near

the Welsh clergy which followed, bring us for the
first time into personal contact with what remained of
the British race.   As yet our glimpses of the Britons
since the landing of Hengest have been scant and
dim ; and we learn to prize even the meagre jottings
in which the chronicle of the conquerors tells us of
their advance over Britain, as we turn to the thick
darkness which during this period overspreads the
story of the British defence.   How stubborn that
defence had been, the very length of the struggle has
told us.   To tear the Saxon Shore from the grasp
of its defenders was a work of fifty years ; and
even when the Saxon Shore was lost, when its
cities had become heaps of charred ruins, when the
fortresses which had so long held the pirates at
bay from the Wash to the Solent were but squares
of broken and desolate walls, the country at large
retained its cohesion, and faced its foes as stub-
bornly as before.   Driven as they were from their
first line of defence, the Britons fell back on an inner
line, whose natural features presented yet more for-
midable obstacles to their assailants, and the island
as a whole remained untouched by the English sword.
The next seventy years saw even the bulk of Britain
reft from them.   But throughout the long fight the
British resistance remained as stubborn as ever.   The
conquest of Yorkshire, of the southern downs, and of

this border, yet still British ground.   It is clear that the
Hwiccas and West-Saxons were still, as in Ceawlin's day, politi-
cally distinct, and we have seen that at that time Welsh and
Hwiccas were allied.   If this alliance went on, the presence of
Welsh clergy in this border-line is easily accounted for.

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the valley of the Thames, though they shook the province more roughly, failed to break it up ; for in the forests of Wyre and of Arden the Britons held out doggedly against the Saxon, while the fastnesses of Charnwood and Sherwood held at bay the invaders of the Trent valley.   And now that even Mid-Britain was gone, and that the provincials of the south-west had been cut off from the general body of their race, the Britons still faced the West-Saxons along the lower Severn, still held the Mercians at bay along the head waters of the Trent, while along the dark range of moors from Elmet to Selkirk they barred the advance of the Deirans and Bernicians of the north.

Their dis-organization.

But long before this point in the strife was reached the contest had told fatally on their political and social condition.   In the unconquered part of Britain indeed the war had produced results almost as great as in the conquered.   Severed from connexion with the Empire or with the rest of Europe, broken by defeats, wasted by incessant forays, what remained of the province lost little by little even the semblance of unity.   The disorganization which had begun in the strife of the native and Romanized parties cannot but have widened as time went on. In the more remote and uncivilized parts of the province west of the Yorkshire moorlands and the Severn, in what was afterwards called Cumbria or the district from the Clyde to the Dee, in the country which now answers to Wales, Devon, and Cornwall, the native party definitely got the upper hand,[1] while

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[1] This is shown by the list of princes in the " Epistola " of Gildas, cc. 1-8.

in Mid-Britain the Romanized cities may have retained
their supremacy. But everywhere there was the
same fatal tendency to faction and severance. Save
at moments of utter peril no one chieftain united
the native tribes under his sway; no one city or
league of cities gathered the towns around it. A
crowd of petty princes jostled and battled over the
surface of the west; while each town isolated itself
within its own district of subject country and only
joined its immediate neighbours for defence on the
approach of the Englishmen.

In this political chaos the old Roman civilization *Augustine*
died slowly away. History and tradition alike repre- *and the*
sent the chiefs of the west as having sunk into utter *Britons.*
barbarians. In the district which they ruled order
and law had well-nigh disappeared in an outbreak
of greed, of bloodshed, and of lust, against which a
Christianity that was fast sinking into mere super-
stition, and that seems to have been threatened for a
while by apostasy, battled in vain. A chaos, at once
political and religious, such as this gave little chance
of welcome to a stranger, Christian though he were,
who suddenly came from the midst of the conquerors,
and under the protection of an English king, to
claim communion with the Welsh, and to call on them
to unite in preaching the gospel to their English foes.
Augustine found, indeed, more obstacles than mere
national hate. So little did the Roman missionaries
know of the country to which they had been sent,[1]

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[1] Augustine's successor, Laurentius, owned that he and his
fellow-missionaries came to Britain without any knowledge of
the island. "Dum nos sedes apostolica . . . in his occiduis

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that it was as a surprise that they found themselves confronted by Christians whose usages were in some ways not their own, who above all celebrated Easter at a different season,[1] and who in their horror at these differences refused not only to eat with the Roman priests, but even to take their meals in the same house with them.[2] A miracle, which Augustine believed himself to have wrought, failed to convince the Welsh of their errors in these matters ; and when seven of their bishops, with monks and scholars from the great abbey at Bangor by the Dee, assembled at the place of conference, a place which still in Bæda's day preserved its name of "Augustine's Oak," they were in no humour for hearkening to his claims on their obedience as Archbishop. The story ran that they consulted a solitary as to their course. "Let the stranger arrive first," replied the hermit ; " if then he rise at your approach, hear him submissively as one meek and lowly and who has taken on him the yoke of Christ. But if he rise not at your coming, and despise you, let him also be despised of you." Augustine failed to rise : and the conference broke off with threats from the Roman missionaries that if the Britons would not join in peace with their brethren, they should be warred upon by their enemies.[3]

partibus ad prædicandum gentibus paganis dirigeret, atque in hanc insulam, quæ Britannia nuncupatur, contigit introisse antequam cognosceremus ; credentes quod juxta morem universalis ecclesiæ ingrederentur, in magna reverentiæ sanctitatis tam Brittones quam Scottos venerati sumus." (Bæda, H. E. ii. iv.)

[1] We shall have to deal later on with these differences.

[2] See Dagan's refusal, Bæda, H. E. ii. cap. 4.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 2.

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Revival
of the
Britons.

The conference at Augustine's Oak is memorable as the opening of a conflict between the two great branches of the Western Church, the Celtic and the Roman, which was to be fought out in many lands, but nowhere with more violence than in the new England. But to the Britons who took part in it, it had probably little religious significance. Their horror at the variance of usages, their resentment at the claims on their obedience, only gave an edge to their indignation at being called on to join in a work of conversion which of itself recognized the English as permanent masters of the soil they had won. At no moment indeed could they have been less inclined to such a recognition ; for the time at which Augustine appeared before them was a time of national revival. To Gildas, as to every man of his race, the success of the invader had seemed due to the political disorganization among the British themselves, to the moral disorganization which accompanied it, and to the absence of any common and national resistance which followed from this disorganization. But the very triumphs of the English had done something to restore political unity to the chaos which called itself Britain. What were now left unconquered were its purely Celtic portions, the districts along its western coast, where the wild country and the scarcity of towns had given the Roman tradition but little hold, and where, even under the Roman rule, the native chieftains had probably been suffered to maintain much of their older sovereignty over their clans. In the break up of national life during the years that had passed since the withdrawal of the

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imperial administration, such chiefs had become in-
dependent lords of distinct provinces ; and their feuds
and lawlessness broke the strength of the island.   In
the midst of the sixth century, Gildas paints for us
a terrible picture of the savage chieftains who parted
Damnonia and our Wales between them.[1] But even
then the growing pressure of the invaders was
making this mere chaos of jarring princes impossible.
The pettier British states were being forced to group
themselves before the stranger.   In the peninsula of
the south-west, Constantine, a descendant, it may be,
of Ambrosius Aurelianus, was owned as supreme.
West of the Severn, Maelgwn, a prince of what we
now know as North Wales, towered above his brother-
rulers.   The petty states from the Derwent to Dum-
barton were fused together in a kingdom of Strath-
clyde.   The consolidation gave a new vigour to the
British resistance ; and the rout of Ceawlin at Faddi-
ley was but the first proof of the change.   Not only
were the Welsh strong enough to drive back the West-
Saxons from the upper valley of the Severn, and for
twenty years after to hold its eastern passes against
the advance guard of the Engle who were pressing
up the Trent, but they were strong enough to become
aggressors in their turn, to penetrate into the heart of
the country from which they had been driven half a
century before, and to humble the pride of Wessex
on the battle-ground of Wanborough.

*Britons
and Scots.*   These triumphs in the south were but a few years
old when Augustine came to call them to reconciliation
with their foes.   And at that very moment triumphs

[1] " Epistola," cc. 1-8.

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as great seemed impending in the north. From the
moment of his accession to the Northumbrian throne
in 593, Æthelfrith had taken up the work of conquest
with a ruthless vigour. His sword became the terror
of the Welsh along his whole western border, from
the Yorkshire moorlands to the dykes and forests which
sheltered the Britons of Clydesdale.[1] But fierce as
Æthelfrith's attack was, it was only ten years after
his accession that his advance in this quarter became
so threatening as to unite in one vast confederacy
the whole force of the countries along his border.
The Welsh states of the north had united in a
kingdom of Strathclyde ;[2] and the men of Strath-
clyde found at this juncture allies in a neighbour
race. At the close of the Roman rule over Britain,
settlers from the north of Ireland (whose inhabitants
then bore the name of Scots) crossed the strait of
sea between Ulster and Cantyre, and founded a Scot
or Irish kingdom, the kingdom of Dalriada, around the
shores of Loch Linnhe. This little kingdom had rested
till now in obscurity ; but freeing itself gradually
from the claims of overlordship put forward by the
sovereigns of Ireland, and holding its own against the
Picts who surrounded it on the north and the east, it
started towards the close of the sixth century into
a new and vigorous life. It is possible that an
impulse was given to it by an Irish exile, Colom
or Colomba, who landed in 563 in the little isle of
Hii off the Pictish coast, and founded there a reli-
gious house which was destined to be the Christian
centre of northern Britain. The isle lay within the

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 34. [2] Skene, " Celtic Scotland," vol. i. p. 159.

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Dægsastan.

dominions of the Picts, but the sympathies of
Colomba naturally drew him to his Irish kinsmen
round Loch Linnhe, and after ten years of a pros-
perous rule at Hii his legend tells us that he was
bidden by an angel to consecrate Aedhan, the son of
Gafran, as King of Dalriada.[1]

The consecration of Aedhan in 574 set him high
among his neighbour chieftains ; and his success in
driving the Bernicians from the district south of the
head of the Firth of Forth,[2] which was long a de-
bateable land between the various races that sur-
rounded it, set him in the forefront of the struggle
against their kings.   The series of fights which went
on in that quarter for the twenty years between 580
and 600, were the prelude to the more formidable
attack of 603.   In spite of his seventy years,[3] Aedhan
stood first in the league which formed itself in that
year against Northumbria ; and it was under his com-
mand that the hosts of Scots and Britons which had
gathered from the whole district between the Lune and
the lakes of Argyle marched upon Liddesdale.   The
point at which they struck was the key of Æthel-
frith's kingdom ; for from the vale of the Liddel one
pass leads into the valley of the Teviot and the
Tweed, and another into that of the Tyne.[4]   But this
important position was guarded by the rampart of
the Cattrail, which formed the boundary between
Northumbria and Strathclyde ; and here, at Dægsa's

[1] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 198 and note.
[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 160.
[3] Tighernach places his birth in 533 (Skene, "Celtic Scot-
land," i. 160, note).   [4] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 162.

stone, whose name we still catch in the village of
Dawston, Æthelfrith awaited his foe.   The fight was
a long and obstinate one ; Theodbald, a brother of
Æthelfrith, was slain, and the whole force he led
cut to pieces.   But the victory of the Northumbrians
was only the more complete.   The field was heaped
with British dead, while of Aedhan's whole army only
a few warriors succeeded in escaping with their king.[1]
The blow dissolved the confederacy which had threat-
ened Northumbria.   The Scot power, indeed, was
utterly broken ; " from that day to this," Bæda cries
in accents of unwonted triumph more than a hundred
years later, " no Scot-king has dared to come into
Britain to battle with the English folk."   And while
the Scots withdrew to their far-off fastnesses, the
Welsh themselves lay at the conqueror's mercy.   No
effort indeed was made to seize their land for English
settlement ;[2] but we cannot doubt that the submis-
sion and tribute which we find Strathclyde owing
to later kings of Northumbria was the result of
Æthelfrith's victory at Dægsa's stone.

While Northumbria was thus widening its lordship
in the north, Æthelberht was at last entering on the
great experiment of Christianizing his dominion in

[1] Bæda, H. E. i. c. 34.
[2] This comes vividly out in the sites of the royal "vills."
" In Bæda's day, " says Mr. Hodgson Hinde (" Transac. Hist. Soc.
of Lanc. and Cheshire," viii. 11), " among the numerous villas
maintained for the migratory residence of the royal household, not
one occurs beyond the chain of hills which separated the eastern
district of the Northumbrian kingdom from the west.   The reason
is obvious, that even then no attempt was made to colonize the
latter."

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Mid-Britain which Gregory and Augustine had urged upon him. His delay showed his sense of its risk ; [1] for it was three years after Gregory's appeal, and seven years after the conversion of his own kingdom, before Æthelberht ventured on pushing the new faith across its borders. In 604 Augustine set Justus as bishop in the " Rochester," which had risen on the ruins of Durobrevis,[2] over all the Kentish kingdom west of the Medway. The diocese may mark a dependent realm of West-Kent, whose relation to the common Kentish king would be reflected in the subordination of this see to the mother-see at Canterbury ; as the memory of the house of St. Andrew on the Cœlian from which the first English missionary had come was preserved in the dedication to St. Andrew of the church which Æthelberht founded and endowed at Rochester. But his next step was a more important one. Of all his dependent kingdoms Essex was most closely linked to the Kentish king. His sister Ricula had been wedded to the East-Saxon king, Sledda ; and their son, Æthelberht's nephew, Sæberht, was now ruling as an under-king over that people.[3] The little kingdom had been raised into consequence by its conquest of London in Æthelberht's boyhood : for if the city had been for a while laid waste the natural advantages of

[1] Gregory's letter is dated 601 ; Æthelberht's first effort to carry it out was in 604.

[2] " Justum vero in ipsâ Cantiâ Augustinus episcopum ordinavit in civitate Durobrevi, quam gens Anglorum a primario quondam illius, qui dicebatur Hrof, Hrofascæstre agnominat " (Bæda, H. E. ii. 3).

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3. " Regnabat, quamvis sub potestate positus Ædelbercti."

its position soon began to draw commerce and in-
habitants once more to its site ; and in the early years
of the seventh century it was already a dwelling-
place of Englishmen.[1] In 604 Mellitus was sent as
bishop to preach to the East-Saxons ;[2] and so com-
plete seemed the success of his preaching in the
conversion of Sæberht and his folk that Æthelberht
began the building of a church of St. Paul as the
bishop's-stool of the new diocese in London itself.[3]
His act—for there is no mention even of Sæberht's
co-operation—marks how direct was his rule over the
East-Saxon realm.   But the site of the new church is
hardly less significant.   Though settlers were again
repeopling London, the western extremity of the
Roman city can still have been but a waste in 604 ;
for not only could the new church be placed there,
but its precincts embraced even to the middle ages a
large district around it, which stretched almost from
the river to Newgate, and from near the wall as far
inland as Cheapside.

The conversion of the East-Saxons, and the success

[1] " Orientalium Saxonum . . . . quorum metropolis Lundonia
civitas est, super ripam præfati fluminis posita, ei ipsa mul-
torum emporium populorum terra marique venientium." From
the " est " and " metropolis " I take the latter words of Bæda (H.
E. ii. 3) to refer, not to Æthelberht's day, but to his own in the
eighth century, when the city was the " mother-city " of the
East-Saxon diocese.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 3) says that in 604 Mellitus was sent " ad
prædicandum " in Essex, and that, when the province at his
preaching received the word, Æthelberht built the church of
St. Paul in London.   The building was thus after 604, but
probably soon after.

[3] Bæda, H. E. ii. 3.

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*Rædwald
of East-
Anglia.*

of the first step in that general attack on English heathendom which he had so vigorously urged on Æthelberht, must have been among the last news which reached Gregory the Great ere he died in 606. His death was soon followed by that of Augustine himself; whose body was laid beside the walls of his church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was now rising to completion.[1] But the death of Gregory was only the prelude to a fresh step forward in the realization of his plans. Rædwald, the king of the East-Anglians, was summoned to Æthelberht's court; and the pressure of his over-lord sufficed to induce him to receive baptism as a Christian.[2] But on his return home he found no will among the East-Anglians to accept the new faith; and their reluctance was backed by the opposition of his wife.[3] Rædwald strove to satisfy the conflicting will of his over-lord and his own people by a characteristic compromise. He retained the older gods, but he placed the new Christ among them, and set a Christian altar in the temples beside the altar of the deities of his race.[4]

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 3.

[2] Bæda (H. E. ii. 15) gives no date for Rædwald's baptism, his subsequent apostasy, or his after rise to independence. But the first must have been after the conversion of Essex in 604, and the last was some while before Æthelberht's death in 616 (Bæda, H. E. ii. 5). (See postea, p. 238, note 3.) The baptism was "in Cantia" (H. E. ii. 15); the apostasy, "rediens domum."

[3] "Rediens domum, ab uxore suâ et quibusdam perversis doctoribus seductus est."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 15.

[4] "Ita ut, in morem antiquorum Samaritanorum, et Christo servire videretur et diis quibus antea serviebat; atque in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi, et arulam ad victimas dæmoniorum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 15. What is odder is.

That such a compromise would content Æthelberht
was little likely ; and we can hardly fail to connect the
strife which must have arisen over this rejection of the
religion of Kent with the next incident in the history
of East Anglia. It was " while Æthelberht was still
living " that Rædwald took his place as over-lord in
Mid-Britain.[1] Religion indeed may have furnished
only a pretext for the rising of the East-Anglians.
At this moment they formed the strongest, as they
were the most clearly defined, of the central tribes
between the Humber and the Thames. From the
rest of the island their land was almost entirely cut
off by the fens that bordered it on the north, and bent
round to join the great forest belt which stretched
along its western 'border, while the broad estuary of
the Stour parted it from Essex on the south. The
easy access to its shores from the German coast had
probably aided in giving a specially Teutonic character
to its population ; and the recent gathering of its
conquering tribes under a single king furnished a
stock of warlike energy which found an outlet in the
subjection of their neighbours. It was, we can hardly
doubt, from a recognition of their superior strength,
that, while the East-Saxons still clung to the Kentish

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*Rædwald's
supremacy.*

that this temple with its two altars lasted almost to Bæda's day.
" Quod fanum rex ejusdem provinciæ Aldwulf, qui nostrâ ætate
fuit, usque ad suum tempus perdurasse, et se in pueritia vidisse
testabatur."

[1] After describing Æthelberht's " imperium " over the English
states south of Humber, and stating that Æthelberht was the
third who " imperium hujusmodi obtinuit," Bæda says, " quartus,
Rædwald, rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam vivente Ædil-
bercto *eidem* suæ genti ducatum præbebat " (H. E. ii. 5).

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king,[1] the rest of his subject peoples threw off his supremacy, and accepted in its place the supremacy of Rædwald.   Of the incidents of this great revolution we are told nothing.   But revolution as it was, it marked how permanent the threefold division of Britain had now become.   If Mid-Britain threw off the supremacy of Kent, its states none the less remained a political aggregate ; and their fresh union under the king of East Anglia was only a prelude to their final and lasting union under the lordship of Mercia.

Æthelfrith.   That the revolution which set Rædwald of East Anglia over the tribes of Mid-Britain was wrought with so little change save the isolation of Kent and of Essex was probably due to the fact that both the great powers of the south and of the north were too busied at the time with troubles of their own to meddle in those of their neighbours.   In Wessex Ceolwulf was still carrying on the long strife of his reign, and battling "incessantly against Angles or Welsh."[2]   To the civil struggles within his realm were added attacks from without.   In 607 we find him fighting on the south-eastern border of his kingdom against the South-Saxons ;[3] and when he was succeeded by his nephew Cynegils, the grandson of Cutha, in 611,[4] the accession of the young king was followed by an inroad of the Britons which carried

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[1] I conclude this from Mellitus remaining at London till Æthelberht's death (Bæda, H. E. ii. 5).

[2] Engl. Chron. a. 597.

[3] Engl. Chron. a. 607.   This loss of Sussex may mark the date of the break up of Æthelberht's supremacy.

[4] Engl. Chron. a. 611.

them into the heart of the realm. In 614 Cynegils
fought at Bampton in Oxfordshire against the
Welshmen, and the importance of the battle was
shown by the fall of two thousand Britons on the
field.[1] How vigorous the temper of the Welsh
continued to be is clear from the fact that this
inroad of the southern Britons into Wessex fol-
lowed one of the most terrible overthrows which
the Britons of the north had as yet received. Since
his victory at Dægsa's Stan in 603 the energies of
Æthelfrith seem to have been spent in coping with
the disaffection of Deira. The spirit of national in-
dependence was quickened afresh among the Deirans
as the heirs of their kingly stock grew to manhood,
and the presence of these heirs on his border became
a danger which called Æthelfrith to action. On the
fall of Deira the house of Ælla had found a refuge, it
is said, among their British neighbours; and at this
time—if we accept Welsh tradition—they were shel-
tered by the king of Gwynedd, a district which then
embraced the bulk of the present North Wales,[2] and

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 614. "This year Cynegils and Cwichelm
fought at Beandun, and slew three thousand and sixty-five Welsh-
men." Beandun is supposed to be Bampton in Oxfordshire.
If so, the raid was on the valley of the Cherwell, and the Welsh
may have struck over the Cotswolds by Cirencester. They may
have been in league, as before, with the Hwiccas.

[2] We shall return afterwards to these sons of Ælla. All we
know from English sources is that in 614—a year later—
Hereric (Ælla's grandson) and his family, "exularet sub rege
Brittonum Cerdice" (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23), and with him may have
been Ælla's son Eadwine. But who was this "king Cerdic of
the Britons"? Hussey (note to Bæda, p. 225) makes him a
king "in Elmet"; Geoffry of Monmouth places him between

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through its outlier of Elmet pushed forward into the heart of southern Deira. The danger of a league between the Deirans and the Welsh was one which Æthelfrith could not overlook; and it was to meet this danger that he broke in 613 through the barrier that had so long held the Engle of the north at bay.

Battle of Chester.

Though the deep indent in the Yorkshire shire-line to the west proves how vigorously the Deirans had pushed up the river-valleys into the moors, it shows that they had been arrested by the pass at the head of Ribblesdale; while further to the south the Roman road that crossed the moors from York to Manchester was blocked by the unconquered fastnesses of Elmet, which reached away to the yet more difficult fastnesses of the Peak. But the line of defence was broken as the forces of Æthelfrith pushed over the moors along Ribblesdale into our southern Lancashire. His march was upon Chester, the capital of Gwynned, and probably the refuge-place of Eadwine. From the first the position of Chester had marked it out as of military and political importance. Once masters of central Britain, the Romans had sought for a military post from which a legion could watch alike the wild tribes of our Lancashire and Lake district, and the yet wilder tribes of the present North Wales. They found such a position at a point where the Dee, after flowing in a direct course from the south, bends suddenly westward and slants thence to its estuary in the Irish Sea. Just at this turn to the

Maelgwn and Cadvan or Cadwalla as king of Gwynned. I have attempted to reconcile these accounts in the text.

west a rise of red sandstone which abutted on the river
along its northern bank offered a site for a town;
and it was on this site that the Roman camp was
established which grew as men gathered round it into
the city of Deva, whose other name of Castrum
Legionum has come down to us in the form of
Chester. The form of Deva recalled its military
origin. The town was in fact a rough square of
houses through which the road from Cumbria, enter-
ing by the north gate, struck to the bridge across
the Dee on the south, while in the very centre of the
place the line of this road was crossed at right-angles
by the road from Central Britain to Wales, the
famous Watling Street, which came over the low
watershed of the Trent and entered the city by its
eastern gate. Deva, therefore, not only held the
passage over the Dee, but commanded the line of
communication from Central Britain to both the
north-west and the west; and so important a post
was naturally guarded by fortifications of no common
order. The river, indeed, which after passing the
city makes a fresh bend to the north, furnished a
natural line of defence on the south and the west
of the town, for a thin strip of marsh which filled
the lower ground between the bridge and the gate
that led to it widened on the west into a broad
morass which is now represented by the meadows
of the Rood-eye.[1] On the east and the north, where
no such natural barrier presented itself, the site of
the town was cut off from the general level of the
sandstone rise by a trench hewn deeply in the soft red

[1] See Mr. Freeman's map, Norman Conquest, iv. 311.

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rock, over which still tower the massive walls which, patched and changed as they have been in later days, are still mainly the work of Rome. At the news of the danger of Chester, Brocmael, the Prince of Powys, marched anew from his home at Pengwyrn, the after Shrewsbury, to rescue the city from the Northumbrians, as he had rescued it, only twenty years before, from the West-Saxons. But the terror of a coming doom had fallen on the Britons. Two thousand monks dwelt some miles from the city in one of those vast religious settlements which characterized Celtic Christianity, and after a three days' fast a thousand of these made their way to the field to pray for their countrymen. Æthelfrith watched the wild gestures of the monks as they stood apart from the host with arms outstretched in prayer, and bade his men slay them in the coming fight. "Bear they arms or no," said the king, "they fight against us when they cry against us to their God." Abandoned by Brocmael, who fled before the English onset, the monks were the first to fall; but the heavy loss sustained by the Northumbrian army proved the stubbornness of the British resistance.[1] All however was in vain, and the victory of Æthelfrith was followed by the fall of Chester; while the district over which the wasted city had ruled, a district which seems to have stretched from Nantwich as far as the Mersey, or perhaps the Ribble, fell with the city itself into the hands of the Northumbrians.

*Its
results.*

The battle of Chester marked a fresh step forward in the struggle with the Welsh. By their victory at

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 2.

Deorham the West-Saxons had cut off the Britons of
Dyvnaint, of our Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Corn-
wall, from the general body of their race. What
remained was broken anew into two parts by the
battle of Chester ; for the conquest of Æthelfrith had
parted the Britons of what we now call Wales from
the Britons of Cumbria and Strathclyde. From this
moment therefore Britain as a country ceased to
exist. No general resistance of the Welsh people
was henceforth possible, and the warfare of Briton
against Englishman died down into a warfare of
separate English kingdoms against separate British
kingdoms, of Northumbria against the Cumbrians
and Strathclyde, of Mercia against the Welsh between
Anglesea and the British Channel, of Wessex against
the tract which stretches from Mendip to the Land's
End. Nor was the victory of less importance to
England itself. With it the Northumbrian king-
dom was drawn from its isolated existence beyond
the Humber. Even had no dynastic interests forced
Æthelfrith, as they were soon to force him, into
conflict with his fellow-Englishmen in the south,
the very fact that he was brought into actual
contact with them would have made new relations
inevitable. Till now the estuary of the Humber and
the huge swamp that stretched from it to the fast-
nesses of Elmet had served as an effectual barrier
between Northumbria and Mid-Britain. But this
barrier was turned when the capture of Chester and
of its district brought the Northumbrians to the
west of what had till now been the " English March."
The low rise which forms the watershed between

BRITAIN IN 616.

Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde Cumbrians

NORTHUMBRIA

Chester

West Engle or Mercia

Pecsætan

Lindiswara

Gyrwas

Middle
Engle

SUPREMACY

North Folk

East
Engled

North Welsh

WYRE

ARDEN

South
Engle

OF REDWALD

South Folk

DEAN

East
Saxons

SUPREMACY OF

Saxons

Middle
Sexe

ETHELBERET

WEST SAXONS

Hwiccas

Surrey

Kent

West Wales

SELWOOD

ANDREDSWEALD

South Saxons

Stanford's Geographl Estabt

the basins of the Trent and the Severn was a far
different barrier from the Humber and the Fen;
it is so insignificant indeed that to one who looks from
the heights of Cranborne Chase the great central
plain through which the Trent rolls its waters seems
to bend without a break from Yorkshire round the
blue mountains of the Peak through the plains of
Cheshire to the sea. That the Britons had held
such a border so long against the Mercians shows the
stubbornness of their defence as well perhaps as the
weakness of these " West-English " assailants ; but it
could form no lasting or effective barrier between
Mid-Britain and the great Northern kingdom which
thus found itself on its flank.

Fresh indeed from the glory of his victory at *Fall of*
Chester, Æthelfrith could not fail to wake to new *Kent.*
dreams of ambition as he looked to the south. Wessex
seemed weaker than ever. A new king, Cynegils, had
mounted its throne on Ceolwulf's death in 611,[1] but the
strife within and without went on without a check,
and in the very year after the fall of Chester, in 614,
a Welsh army, as we have seen, in union perhaps
as before with the Hwiccas, succeeded in penetrat-
ing into the heart of the West-Saxon realm. They
were defeated indeed at Bampton in the Cherwell
valley with a great slaughter, but their inroad showed
that if the Britons were no match for Northumbria
they were still strong enough and bold enough to
form a match for the West-Saxons. The power, too,
that had risen on the ruin of Wessex had as suddenly
collapsed. The supremacy which but a few years

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 611.

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before Kent had wielded over all Mid-Britain between Watling Street and the Humber, had shrivelled in the later days of Æthelberht into a supremacy over the East-Saxons alone. And at Æthelberht's death in 616[1] even this fragment of its older empire was lost. Sæberht died in the same year as his over-lord, and the sons of King Sæberht threw off their father's faith. The two young kings burst into the church at London where Bishop Mellitus was saying mass. "Why don't you give us that white bread which you gave to our father Saba?" they cried. The bishop bade them first be baptized; but they refused to enter the font. "We have no need of that," they answered, "but we want to refresh ourselves with that bread;" and a renewed offer of baptism was met with a sulky bidding to begone from their land, since he would not hearken to them in so small a matter.[2] The rejection of the new faith was a sign that the East-Saxons had thrown off their subjection to the power which had thrust Christianity on them. But that power itself seemed bent on throwing off the new faith, for when Mellitus crossed the Thames he found even Kent in the throes of a religious reaction. Æthelberht's son Eadbald declared himself a heathen, and in the old heathen fashion took his father's wife for his own. In spite of its twenty years' continuance in the land the new faith had little hold on the Kentishmen; and they followed Eadbald to the altar of Woden as they had followed Æthelberht to the altar of Christ. Mellitus with

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 616; Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

Bishop Justus of Rochester fled over to Gaul, while
Laurentius of Canterbury, who was proposing to
follow them, spent the eve of his departure in the
church of St. Peter and St. Paul.[1]   A dream, however,
in which the first appeared to him, and scourged him
for his cowardice, drove him in the morning to a fresh
remonstrance with the king.   The marks of the
scourge and the wondrous tale told by Laurentius
did their work.   Eadbald "feared much," and the
fear was strong enough to again overturn the worship
of Woden and restore throughout Kent the worship
of Christ.

But isolated as it had become, and torn as it must   *Eadwine.*
have been with this religious strife, Kent ceased to be
of weight in English politics.   Its power over Mid-
Britain had passed, as we have seen, to East Anglia ;
and it was along the bounds of Rædwald's over-lord-
ship that the borders of the Northumbrian kingdom
now stretched from the Humber to the head-waters
of the Trent.   A collision would have been inevitable
in any case ; but it was hastened by the jealousy with
which Æthelfrith followed the movements of the house
of Ælla.[2]   Of Ælla's children, the elder had died in

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 6.

[2] On the invasion of Deira by Æthelric in 589 two sons of
Ælla had fled from their fatherland into exile.   One of these,
whose name is lost, must have already reached manhood, for in
the early years of his exile he became the father of Hereric,
whose name has been preserved to us through the sanctity of his
child, Hild.   As we hear no more of him, this elder son must have
died in those years of wandering.   His son Hereric, with his
wife Bregeswid and their two children, Hereswid, who afterwards
married Æthelhere (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23), king of East Anglia,

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exile ; and his son Hereric, while sheltered at the court of the British king, Cerdic, after the battle of Chester, was removed by poison in 615.[1] But a second child of Ælla's still remained. Eadwine had been but a boy of three years old when his house was driven into exile ; and it was only at Hereric's death that he became the representative of the kingly stock of Deira. While his brother's line found shelter among the Welsh, he seems to have sought refuge among the wild fastnesses over the Mercian border [2] with Cearl, who was at that time king of the Mercians. Cearl gave the fugitive his daughter Quænburg to wife ; and two boys were born of this marriage.[3] But even from

and the more celebrated Hild, who founded the house of Whitby, was, in Hild's infancy (and she was born in 614), "in exile with Cerdic, a king of the Britons," and was then poisoned. Eadwine, Ælla's other son, must have been much younger than his unnamed brother ; he can in fact have been little older than his nephew Hereric, for he was but twenty-eight when Hereric, already a father of two children, was murdered. (Bæda, H. E. iv. 23 ; Flor. Worc. ed. Thorpe, vol. i. 268.) It is note-worthy that one daughter of Ælla, Acha, who remained in Deira, became Æthelfrith's wife ; a marriage clearly intended to reconcile the Deirans to his rule.

[1] "Cum vir ejus Hereric exularet sub rege Britonum Cerdice, ubi eb veneno periit."—Bæda, H. E iv. 23.

[2] "Cum persequente illum Ædilfrido per diversa occultus loca vel regna multo annorum tempore profugus vagaretur, tandem venit ad Rædwaldum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 12.

[3] "Osfrid et Eadfrid, filii regis Ædwini, qui ambo ei exuli nati sunt de Quænburgâ, filiâ Cearli regis Merciorum."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 14. The boys were born therefore before 617, when Eadwine's "exile" ceased, and in 633 Osfrid was old enough to have a son, Yffi, who was carried off to Kent with the children of Eadwine (Bæda, H. E. ii. 20). But as Osfrid is called "bellicosus juvenis" when he fell at Hæthfield in 633, he may well have

Mercia Eadwine was at last driven, doubtless by the
pressure of his Northumbrian rival ; and in 617 he
appeared at the court of the East Engles, where
Rædwald gave him welcome and promises of security.

The welcome and pledge showed perhaps that the
East-Anglian king believed war with the North-
umbrians to be inevitable. Eadwine's presence in-
deed at his court was no sooner announced in the
north than three embassies from Æthelfrith followed
in quick succession, each offering gold for Eadwine's
murder, or threatening war if his life was spared.[1] In
spite of his pledges, greed and the fear of war seemed
to shake the resolve of Rædwald ; and he promised
the envoys either to slay the Ælling, or to give him
into their hands. It was at sunset that a friend of
the exile who had learned the king's will called
Eadwine from his sleeping chamber to warn him of
the danger and offer him guidance to a fresh lurking
place. The noble temper of one who was destined
to greatness breathed in the exile's answer. " I
cannot do this thing," he said, " I cannot be the first
to treat the pledge which I have received from so
great a king as a thing of nought, and that when
he has done me no wrong, nor showed me enmity.
Better, if I am to die," he ended, in words that told
of the weariness of a life of wandering: " better
Rædwald should slay me than some meaner man ! "
The silence of the night gathered round Eadwine

been some eighteen years old, which would bring his birth and
Quænburg's marriage to the period just after the battle of
Chester.

[1] Bæda, H. E. ii. 12.

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as he sat where his friend had left him on the stone
bench at the door of the king's court. Suddenly a
man drew near in the dusk, and asked him why at
that hour, when others slept, he alone kept watch
through the night. The look and dress of the man
were foreign and strange to him ; as we shall see
hereafter, they were probably those of a Roman priest,
Paulinus, who had come northwards from Kent, and
may now have been in secret communication with Ræd-
wald's queen. The king had revealed to his wife his
purpose of betrayal, but her vehement remonstrances
had again changed his mood, and he had pledged
himself afresh to defend the exile. The keen-witted
Italian knew how to make market of the news he
had learned. Heedless of the first haughty repulse
of his greeting, he asked Eadwine what meed he
would give to one who would free him from his cares,
what meed to one who promised that he should live
to surpass in power every English king that had gone
before him ? The thunderstruck exile promised a
meed worthy such tidings. "And what," went on
the stranger, " if he who foretold this could show
thee better rede for life and soul than any of thy
kin ever heard ! wouldst thou hearken to his rede ? "
Eadwine gave his pledge ; and setting his hand on
the exile's head with a bidding that with this sign
he would hereafter claim the promise, the stranger
vanished so rapidly in the dusk that Eadwine held
his voice to have been the voice of a spirit.

*Battle of
the Idle.*

It is possible that the king's wavering and negotia-
tion had been little more than a blind to deceive
Æthelfrith while the East-English were gathering·to

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attack him ; for the refusal to surrender Eadwine was at once followed by the march of Rædwald's army to the Mercian border. The sudden attack took Æthelfrith by surprise. He seems to have been backing his threats by an advance with a small force through the tangled country along the fen which covered the valley of the lower Trent ; for it was here that Rædwald's army attacked him as it emerged from the marshes on the banks of the Idle. The encounter was a memorable one. If Wimbledon was the first recorded fight between the peoples of the conquerors, the fight between Rædwald and Æthelfrith was the first combat between the great powers who had now grouped these peoples about them. But we know nothing of the battle itself. It ended in a victory of the East-Anglian king ; but only a snatch of northern song— " Foul ran Idle with the blood of Englishmen "— has preserved the memory of the day when the little stream of Idle saw Æthelfrith's defeat and fall.[1]

[1] Engl. Chron. (Peterborough) 617. Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 12. Bæda marks the spot as " in finibus gentis Merciorum (*i.e.* of the Mercia of his own day), ad orientalem plagam amnis qui vocatur Idlæ." Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (Arnold), p. 56, gives the proverb, " unde dicitur, amnis Idle Anglorum sanguine sorduit."

Eadwine in Northumbria. THE gathering of the conquering peoples who had encamped on the soil of Britain into three great kingdoms, a process which we may look on as fairly completed at the time of the battle of the Idle, seemed the natural prelude to a fusion of these kingdoms themselves into a single England. It is indeed the effort to bring about this union that forms the history of the English people for the next forty years, and that gives meaning and interest to what Milton scorned as " battles of kites and crows," the long struggles of Northumbrian, Mercian, and West-Saxon kings to establish their supremacy over the general mass of Englishmen. In this struggle Northumbria took the lead. The attack of Æthelfrith upon Rædwald was, in fact, the opening of such a contest. But its issue seemed to have been fatal to any projects of establishing a supremacy, for the fall of Æthelfrith not only preserved the independence of Mid-Britain, but it broke up for the moment the kingdom which his sword had held together. On his defeat Deira rose

against her Bernician masters, and again called the line
of Ælla in its representative, Eadwine, to its throne.
Eadwine, however, was as resolute to hold the two
realms together as Æthelfrith had been ; and he was
no sooner welcomed back by his people of Yorkshire
than he marched northward to make the whole of
Northumbria his own.   As it had been originally
created by the subjection of Deira to the king of
the Bernicians, so it was now held together by the
subjection of Bernicia to the king of the Deirans.
The march of Eadwine drove Æthelfrith's seven sons
from their father's realm ; and followed by a train of
young thegns, whose exile was probably the result
of a fruitless struggle, the descendants of Ida found
refuge over the Forth among the Picts.[1]

Nor was there any loss of strength for the realm *Elmet.*
under its new ruler.   Eadwine was in the prime of
life[2] when he mounted the throne, and the work of
government was carried on with as ceaseless an energy
as that of Æthelfrith himself.   On his northern
border, if we may trust a tradition drawn from its
name, Eadwine crowned a hill which overlooks the
Firth of Forth with his own " Eadwine's burh," or
Edinburgh, which was to grow from a mere border
post against the Picts into the capital of a northern
kingdom.   But it was not in the north or in the
north-west that his main work seems to have been
done.   To the Bernician house of Ida, the most
pressing foes would be the Britons of Cumbria and
Strathclyde ; but to the Deiran house of Ælla the

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[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. c. 1.

[2] He must have been at his accession about thirty years old.

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most pressing foes were the Britons of Elmet.   York,
and not Bamborough, was the centre of Eadwine's
kingdom, and from any of the Roman towers which
still recalled the older glories of that city, the young
king could see rising but a few miles off to the west-
ward the woodlands and moorlands of a British realm.
The kingdom which thus fronted Eadwine covered no
small space of the present Yorkshire.   On the south
it extended to the fastnesses of the Peak, where the
Pecsetan of the middle English were still no doubt
pressing slowly up the valleys of the Derwent and
the Dove.   To the west its border can hardly have
run in any other line than along the higher moorlands
of the chain that parts our Yorkshire from our Lan-
cashire.   How far Elmet extended to the north we
have nothing to tell us ; but from the character of
the ground itself we may fairly gather that the later
forest of Knaresborough formed a portion of its
area, and that it extended in this direction as far as
the upper valleys of the Wharfe and the Nidd.   Its
eastern boundary, which is more important for our
story, can luckily be fixed with greater precision ;
for the road which the Roman engineers drew north-
ward from their bridge over the Don at Danum or
Doncaster, and which bent in a shallow curve by
Castleford and by Tadcaster to York, skirted the very
edge of the forest tract which remained in possession
of the Britons.   Here Leeds itself preserves the name
of Loidis, by which Elmet seems also to have been
known, while Barwick in Elmet shows by its position
how closely the edge of the British kingdom must
have run to the Roman road.

The kingdom of Elmet then answered, roughly

speaking, to the present West-Riding of Yorkshire, but no contrast can be imagined more complete than the contrast between the district of to-day, with its huge towns and busy industries, and the Elmet of Eadwine's day. The bulk of its area must then have been, as it remained indeed down to the seventeenth century, among the loneliest and most desolate parts of Britain. In the south the great woodland which covered it long remained unchanged. As late as Henry the Eighth's days, Sir Thomas Wortley could set his lodge on the crag of Wharncliffe in the midst of the huge oak forest through which the Don, here little more than a mountain torrent, hurries down to the plain, "for his plesor to hear the harte's bell" amidst the stillness of the woods. More to the north by Wakefield the priory of Nostell, in the vale of Calder, tells in its name that the place was still a North Stall of foresters in the woodland when, in the days of the Norman kings, a royal chaplain gathered the hermits whom he found dwelling in its quiet glades into a religious house; while along the skirts of this district stretched the Barnsdale whose "merry greenwood" gave a home to the outlaws and broken men of Robin Hood. To the north was a vast reach of bare moorlands scored with the deep and grassy vales of the Wharfe and the Nidd, while in the very heart of the kingdom thickets and forests, in which the last wolf ever seen in Yorkshire is said to have been killed by John of Gaunt, formed a screen for the town which still, after so many changes and chances,

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Conquest
of
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preserves its original British name of Loidis or
Leeds.[1]

A few miles to the northward, indeed, of Leeds,
traces have been found of Roman ironworks, but all
signs of industrial life had probably long disappeared
when Eadwine marched from York for the conquest
of Elmet.[2] His immediate ground of attack was
possibly a wish to avenge the poisoning of his uncle,
Hereric, by its king, Cerdic ; but we know nothing
of the winning of this district or of its settle-
ment. On the very edge of the British kingdom,
however, on a rise of ground westward of the road
from Castleford to Tadcaster, we find what is pro-
bably a memorial of this conquest in the group of
earthworks at Barwick in Elmet, entrenchments and
ditches inclosing a large area with a mound in its
centre, which probably marks the site of one of the
burhs or fortified houses with which Eadwine held
down the country he had subdued. At Leeds itself
too, the king seems to have established a royal vill,
which would be of the same military character ; while
yet further to the westward in the upper valley of
the Calder, where no " Othere " had as yet settled in
the " field " of the coming Huddersfield, but through
which a solitary track struck to the border moorlands,
we may perhaps find the site of another of Eadwine's

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[1] When the Cistercians settled at Kirkstall close to Leeds in
the twelfth century, they found nothing there " præter ligna et
lapides."

[2] The only authority for the date of this conquest is Nen-
nius c. 63. " Eoguin, filius Alli, ... occupavit Elmet, et
expulit Certic, regem illius regionis."   But we know from Bæda
that Elmet was in Eadwine's hands before his death.

dwellings and fortresses beside the site of the ruins of Campodunum.[1]

But in such a region we naturally find scanty traces of English settlement. The importance of the conquest, indeed, lay not so much in its addition of long ranges of moorland and woodland to Eadwine's realm, as in its clearing away the barrier which this British kingdom interposed between Northumbria and Æthelfrith's conquests to the south of the Ribble. The kingdom of Eadwine thus stretched without a break from the eastern to the western sea, and Chester must have acquired a new importance as the western seaport of Eadwine's realm, for it can only have been in the harbour of Chester that the king can have equipped the fleet which he needed to subdue the sites of Anglesea and Man.[2] But the conquest of Elmet did more than raise Northumbria into a seapower. With the reduction of this district the border of the northern kingdom stretched without a break along the border of Mid-Britain, and the pressure of

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Conquest
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[1] After his conversion, Eadwine "in Campoduno, ubi tunc villa regia erat, fecit basilicam" Bæda, ii. xiv.). (Ælfred's paraphrase however gives for Campodunum "Donafelda," which Gale believes to be Tanfield by Ripon near the Swale.) It was burnt after Eadwine's fall, but its altar was preserved in Bæda's day in the monastery of Abbot Thrydulf, "quod est in silva Elmete" (ibid.) ; and in its stead "pro quâ reges posteriores fecere sibi villam in regione quæ vocatur Loidis" (ibid.). The "Elmedsætna" with their territory of six hundred hides mentioned in the old list given by Kemble ("Saxons in England," vol. i. p. 81) are probably the settlers in Elmet after its conquest.

[2] "Mevanias Brittonum insulas, quæ inter Hiberniam et Brittaniam sitæ sunt, Anglorum subjecit imperio."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

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Eadwine upon the southern Engle became irresistible. Rædwald's death followed immediately after his victory at the Idle,[1] and the dominion he had built up may have fallen to pieces in the hands of his son Eorpwald ; it is at any rate certain that before the close of Eorpwald's reign the tribes of the Trent valley [2] had come to own the supremacy of Eadwine. It was in fact his mastery over Mid-Britain that brought the Northumbrian king to the borders of Wessex. Eadwine prepared for a struggle with this last rival by a marriage with the daughter of the Kentish king, Eadbald, which, if it did not imply the subjection of the Kentish kingdom, in any case bound it to his side. In the summer of 625 [3] the priest Paulinus brought Ethelburh or Tate to the Northumbrian court at York. The marriage was taken by the West-Saxons as a signal of the coming attack ; and a story preserved by Bæda tells something of the fierceness of the struggle which ended in the subjection of the conquerors of Southern Britain to the supremacy of Northumbria. In the Easter-court of 626,[4] which he held in a king's town near the river Derwent, Eadwine gave audience to Eumer, an envoy of the West-Saxons. Eumer

[1] Eorpwald succeeded him in 617.—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15 ; see Hussey's note.

[2] Paulinus baptized " præsente rege Eadwine " in the Trent valley at Tiovulfingacaester, and this conversion of the Lindsey folk with the establishment of a bishop's see at Lincoln must have been brought about by the same influence (Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16), as well as the conversion of the East-Anglian king Eorpwald (ibid. c. 15).

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

brought a message from Cwichelm, who was now
joined in their kingship with his brother Cynegils,
but in the midst of the conference he started to his
feet, drew a dagger from his robe, and flung himself
on the Northumbrian sovereign. Lilla, a thegn of
the royal war-band, threw himself between Eadwine
and the assassin ; but so fell was the stroke that even
through Lilla's body the dagger still reached the
king. The wound however was slight, and Eadwine
was soon able to avenge it by marching on the West-
Saxons and slaying or subduing all who had conspired
against him.[1] The issue of such a triumph was
the recognition of his supremacy by Cynegils :[2]
and with the submission of Cynegils the overlord-
ship of Eadwine practically stretched over the whole
of Britain.

In the nine eventful years which had passed since *Eadwine's rule.*
he mounted his father's throne Eadwine had thus
gathered the whole English race into a single political
body.[3] He was king or overlord of every English
kingdom, save of Kent ; and Kent was knit to him
by his marriage with Æthelburh. The gathering of
the English conquerors into the three great southern,
midland, and northern groups, which had charac-
terized the past forty years, from the battle of
Deorham to the battle of the Idle, seemed to have

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 626 ; Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

[2] " In deditionem recepit."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 9.

[3] " Ita ut, quod nemo Anglorum ante eum, omnes Brittanniæ
fines, qua vel ipsorum vel Brittonum provinciæ habitant, sub
ditione acceperit."—Bæda, H. E. ii. 9. " Majore potentiâ cunctis
qui Brittanniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Brittonum, populis
præfuit præter Cantuariis tantum."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

BRITAIN IN 626.

Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

Northumbria

Cumbria

Isle of Man

Anglesea

SUPREMACY OF EADWINE

North Welsh

West Welsh

Mercia

WYRE

ARDEN

DEAN

HWICCAS

West Saxons

SELWOOD

West Wales

West Engle

Nordanbria

Middle Engle

South Engle

Lindiswara

Lindsey

North Folk

East Engle

South Folk

East Saxons

Middle Soxe

Surrey

KENT

ANDREDSWEALD

South Saxons

Stanford's Geographl Establt

ended in their gathering into a single people in the
hand of Eadwine.   Under Eadwine, indeed, the
greatness of Northumbria reached its height.   Within
his own dominions the king displayed a genius
for civil government which shows how utterly the
mere age of conquest had passed away.   With him
began an English proverb often applied to after
kings, " A woman with her babe might walk scathe-
less from sea to sea in Eadwine's days." [1]   Peaceful
communication revived along the deserted highways ;
the springs by the roadside were marked with stakes,
and a cup was set beside each for the traveller's
refreshment.   Some faint traditions of the Roman
past may have flung their glory round what Bæda
ventures to call this " Empire of the English " ; some
of the Roman majesty had at any rate come back
with its long-lost peace.   Nor is it without signifi-
cance that we find Eadwine's capital established at
York.   A hundred years had passed since its conquest
by the Deirans had left the city a desolate ruin ; but
its natural advantages as the centre of a fertile tract
and as the highest point to which sea-traversing
boats could find their way up the Ouse must soon
have begun to draw population again to its site.   We
do not, however, hear of its new life till we find
Eadwine established at York as his capital,[2] and the
choice of such a settlement in a spot where so much

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16.   The words, "from sea to sea "
show that this order was not confined to Eadwine's own Deira,
but extended over his newer conquests of Elmet and the Ribble
country.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 14.

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remained to tell of the greatness of Rome can hardly have failed to connect itself with the imperial dreams which were stirring in the mind of Eadwine. In his wide rule over the whole of Britain Eadwine seems to have felt himself a successor to its Roman masters. A standard of purple and gold floated before him as he rode through village and township, while a feather-tuft attached to a spear, the Roman tufa, was borne in front of him as he walked through their streets.[1]

Conversion of Northumbria. But the effort for a political unity was a premature effort. Not till two hundred years were past were the English peoples to be really gathered into a single realm. Not till three hundred years were gone by was a real national life to develop itself in a single England. The work was indeed to be in great measure brought about by the very agency which at this moment came to wreck the work of Eadwine. Though Christianity had shrunk back since the death of Æthelberht within the bounds of the Kentish kingdom, the hope of carrying out Gregory's wider plans of conversion had never been abandoned, and in the marriage of Æthelburh with Eadwine, Archbishop Justus saw an opening for attempting the conquest of the north. The new queen brought with her as her chaplain Paulinus, whom we have already seen in East-Anglia. He had been consecrated as Bishop of York in preparation for this journey, and his tall, stooping form, slender, aquiline nose, and black hair falling round a thin, worn face, were long remembered in the north. Æthelburh's zeal for her

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16.

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faith reaped its reward, for, moved by her prayers, Eadwine promised to believe in her god if he returned successful from the fight with the West-Saxons. But he was slow to redeem his pledge. Whether the fate of Æthelberht had warned him or no, he spent the whole winter in silent musing,[1] till Paulinus, laying his hand on his head, revealed himself as the stranger who had promised Eadwine deliverance in Rædwald's court, and claimed the fulfilment of the pledge which the exile had given.[2] Moved, it may be, by the appeal or convinced by the long musings of the winter-tide, Eadwine declared himself a Christian, and in the spring of 627 he gathered the Wise Men of Northumbria to give their rede on the faith he had embraced. The record of the debate which followed is of singular interest as revealing the sides of Christianity which pressed most on our forefathers. To finer minds its charms lay, then as now, in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives—the darkness of the future as of the past. "So seems the life of man, O king," burst forth an aged Ealdorman, "as a sparrow's flight through the hall when one is sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight;

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[1] "Sæpe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum conloquens."—Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 9.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 12.

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but what is before it, what after it, we know not.   If
this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let
us follow it."   Coarser argument told on the crowd.
" None of your folk, Eadwine, have worshipped the
gods more busily than I," said Coifi the priest, " yet
there are many more favoured and more fortunate.
Were these gods good for anything they would help
their worshippers."   Then leaping on horseback he
hurled a spear into the sacred temple at Godman-
ham, and with the rest of the Witan embraced the
religion of the king.[1]

*Its
results.*
But hardly had the change been made, when its
issues justified the king's long hesitation.   Easily
as it was brought about in Eadwine's court, the
religious revolution gave a shock to the power which
he had built up in Britain at large.   Though
Paulinus baptized among the Cheviots as on the
Swale, it was only in Deira that the Northum-
brians really followed the bidding of their king.   If
Eadwine reared anew a church at York, no church,
no altar, rose in Bernicia from the Forth to the Tees.[2]
Nor was the new faith more fortunate in the subject
kingdoms.   Lindsey indeed hearkened to the preach-
ing of Paulinus,[3] and Rædwald's son, Eorpwald of
East Anglia, bent to baptism soon after the conversion
of Eadwine.[4]   But even here the faith of Woden and
Thunder was not to fall without a struggle.   Eorp-
wald was at once slain by a pagan thegn ; and his

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 13.   [2] Bæda, H. E. iii. 2.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 16.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 15.   For the date of Eorpwald's baptism,
see Hussey's note in his Bæda, p. 105.

people returned to their old heathendom. Such a
rejection of the faith of their overlord marks, no
doubt, a throwing off of Eadwine's supremacy by the
men of East Anglia ; and thus prepares us for the
revolution which must have taken place at the same
moment throughout the valley of the Trent, and
above all among the West Engle, or Mercians.

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Till now the Mercians had in no wise been
distinguished from the other Engle tribes. Their
station, indeed, on the Welsh border had invited them
to widen their possessions by conquest, while the rest
of the Anglian peoples of Mid-Britain were shut off
from any chance of expansion ; and this frontier
position must have kept their warlike energy at its
height. But nothing had yet shown in them a power
which could match even that of the Engle on the
eastern coast. It was only at the close of the sixth
century indeed that the settlers along the march had
drawn together into a kingdom : and the bounds of
the Kentish and East-Anglian overlordships show that
the two earliest Mercian kings, Crida and Wibba,
must have owned the supremacy of Æthelberht, and
bowed beneath the supremacy of Rædwald. When
East-Anglia fell from her pride of place into sub-
jection to Eadwine, we can hardly doubt that a
third king, Cearl, who seems to have seized the throne
in spite of the claims of Wibba's son, Penda, sub-
mitted with small reluctance to an overlord who had
wedded his daughter while in exile at his court. But
Quænburg and Cearl had alike passed away ; and at
this moment the old relations of friendship between
Northumbria and these Western Engle were changed

*The
Mercians.*

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Penda.

into an attitude of mutual hostility by the accession of Penda.

It was in 626, on the very eve of Eadwine's conversion, that Penda the son of Wibba became king of the Mercians.[1] Penda was already a man of fifty years old ; and famous for the daring of his raids on the neighbours of his people during the years of his exclusion from the throne.[2] He seems to have seized the kingship at last after a violent struggle, in which the sympathies if not the actual aid of the Northumbrian overlord must, from his ties of kindred, have been with Cearl and his house. With Penda's success, therefore, Eadwine saw himself fronted by a formidable foe in the upper Trent valley. But, vigorous as the new Mercian king was, we can hardly doubt that it was not so much his vigour as the conversion of Eadwine which shook the Northumbrian power over Mid-Britain, and enabled Penda at once to seize the supremacy over its Engle peoples. His efforts would no doubt be aided by the tendency of these peoples themselves to fall back on their older grouping in the days of Rædwald, if not of Æthelberht, and by their preference of a South-Humbrian to a North-Humbrian overlord. But whatever was the cause of his success, he must have already asserted his superiority over the English tribes about him before he could have ventured to

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[1] Malm. Gest. Reg. i. sec. 74.   According to Henry of Huntingdon, Crida was the first Mercian king ; on his death in 600 he was followed by Wibba for ten years, to 610 ; then by Cearl from 610 to 626 ; then by Wibba's son, Penda.

[2] Ibid.

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attack the West-Saxons as he attacked them only two years after his accession, in 628.[1] The strife, however, of the West-Saxon tribes among themselves, as well as the terrible overthrow they had lately suffered at the hands of Eadwine, favoured their assailant ; and their defeat at Cirencester seems to have been a decisive one. The locality of the battle, in the territory not of the original West-Saxon kingdom, but of the Hwiccas, who, as we have seen, still remained as late as Æthelberht's days a separate people from their fellow-Gewissas, may perhaps explain Penda's success, if, like the Britons at Wodensbury, he fought as an ally of the Hwiccas against Cynegils and Cwichelm. The strife in any case ended in a formal treaty,[2] whose provisions we may perhaps guess from what we find soon after to be the bounds of the Mercian rule. In the days of Penda's son, Wulfhere, the whole territory of the Hwiccas had become part of the Mercian realm ; and there is no recorded event by which we can account for this great change of boundaries save the battle of Cirencester.

Such a triumph at once changed the political aspect of Britain. Not only had Mercia risen to supremacy over the valley of the Trent, but her conquest had carried her dominion to the mouth of the Severn and added to her realm our Worcestershire, our Gloucestershire, and our Herefordshire. The West-Saxons, stripped of Ceawlin's winnings, not only shrank into a lesser power, but necessarily passed from their subjection under Eadwine to a virtual submission

*Penda
and
Eadwine.*

[1] Engl. Chron. a. 628.
[2] And gethingodan þa.—Eng. Chron. a. 628.

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to Penda. The Northumbrian king was in fact thrown suddenly back across the Humber; and the work of his earlier years was undone at a blow. But Eadwine was far from relinquishing his aims. The religion he had embraced was used to restore his shaken power; and a Burgundian bishop, Felix, was sent by his brother-in-law, the Kentish king, to again attempt the conversion of the East-Angles.[1] Eadwine however had a stronger arrow in his quiver. Another son of Rædwald, Sigeberht, had been driven under Eorpwald from East-Anglia, and had taken refuge among the Franks over sea. There he had become a Christian; and Eadwine was thus enabled to bring a Christian king of their own stock to the East-Anglians in 631.[2] The reception of Sigeberht involved a fresh reception of Christianity, and doubtless of the overlordship of Northumbria with it. But the winning of East-Anglia made a war with Penda inevitable. East-Engle and West-Engle had in fact to settle which should be supreme over their fellow-peoples about them, and around which should be built up the great Engle state of Mid-Britain. And beyond this strife lay the greater struggle which was to decide whether the Engle of Mid-Britain could hold their own against the Engle of the North.

Penda and the Welsh.

In such a strife the odds were heavy against Penda, had he waited to encounter the hosts of East-Anglia and of Northumbria at once. To crush the northern state, and then deal singly with his rival in Mid-

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.

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Britain was his obvious policy, and accounts for his choosing the part of assailant in the coming struggle. But even single-handed Northumbria was more than his match, and he could hardly have ventured on an attack on Eadwine had he not found aid in the people which had till now been the special enemies of his own border-folk. Cadwallon, the Welsh king of Gwynned, may have seen in Eadwine's difficulties a chance of avenging his race for the conquest of Elmet, as well as of winning back the country which Æthelfrith had reft away; and it was with Cadwallon that Penda leagued himself against their common foe. The absolute severance between conquerors and conquered, which had played so great a part in the events of the last two hundred years, was, as we have seen, fast breaking down. The union of Britons with the Hwiccas in their attack on Ceawlin, the home which the house of Ælla found among the Welsh of Elmet as well as the home which the house of Æthelfrith found among the Picts, were indications that the Britons would henceforth look for help in their struggle to divisions among the Englishmen themselves, and that Englishmen in their turn were willing to seek British aid against their countrymen. Penda boldly recognized this fact as an element in English politics, when his host marched with the host of Cadwallon to attack the Northumbrian king.[1]

The district in which Eadwine took post to meet Penda's attack was on the northernmost skirt of that vast tract of fen-land which formed a natural barrier for Northumbria against any assailant from Mid-

*Battle of
Hatfield.*

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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Britain.   Even the Roman engineers failed to carry a causeway directly from the south across the marshes of the Trent, and the traveller on his way to Eburacum was forced to make. a circuit from Leicester to Lincoln, and to cross the fen, perhaps by a ferry, in the neighbourhood of Gainsborough, ere he could reach a firmer road at Bawtrey, and strike directly for the north.   But even this firmer road was little more than a strip of ground hard pressed between forest and fen ; for on one side, as we have seen, it was closely bordered by the oak-woods of Elmet, while on the other the fen stretched onward without a break from the course of the Trent to the lower channels of the Don, the Aire, the Derwent, and the Ouse.   And not only was this gateway into the Northumbrian territory a narrow one, but it had from very ancient times been barred by strong defences.   The British tribe of the Brigantes had drawn across this strip of land, behind the upper course of the Don, so strong a line of entrenchments that they seemed to have held for a time even the Romans in check ; and this work, which may still be traced after the waste of a thousand years, would if manned by the soldiers of Eadwine have been too formidable a barrier for Penda to face.   To right or left, however, advance was scarcely less difficult ; for it would have been hard to force a way through the southern fastnesses of Elmet, and it seemed even harder to find a road through the skirts of the fen which stretched away to the east.   It was into the fen, however, that Penda plunged.   Its wide reaches of mere marsh and broad pools of water swarming with

eels were broken by lifts of slightly higher ground,
covered by turf which rose and fell, so ran the popular
belief, with the rise and fall of the rivers that ran
through the district, and whose soil was so soft that
it was easy to thrust a pole through it into the waters
beneath. The rises, however, were firm enough to
afford covert for vast herds of deer,[1] and it was from
one such rise to another that the Mercian army must
have made its way along the fen-tracks that threaded
this desolate region. Hatfield, or the Heathfield, was
one of the northernmost of these reaches of soppy
moor; it lay in fact just south of the Don; and
Eadwine, crossing that river by the paved ford which
has left its mark on the name of Stainford, may have
hoped by the seizure of this position to crush his
assailant as he struggled through the pools and moor-
paths of the fen. It was here at any rate, somewhere
near the present town of Hatfield, that the two armies
met; but in the fight which followed the Deiran king
was defeated and slain.[2]

Eadwine's overthrow proved the ruin of his house. *Its*
Of his elder sons by the Mercian Quænburg one *results.*
fell on the field, and another took refuge with
Penda: while his wife Æthelburh fled with her
own two younger children to her brother in Kent.[3]

[1] In 1609 Prince Henry slew five hundred deer in a single
day's hunting here; and before the draining of these fens in
the civil wars deer were said to be as plentiful in Hatfield Chase
as "sheep upon a hill." Smiles, in his "Lives of the Engineers"
(Brindley and Early Engineers, ch. ii.), gives an account of this
draining.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20 ; Engl. Chron. a. 633.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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With her fled Paulinus, for the battle was at once followed by a revival of the old heathendom ; and Osric, a son of Ælla's brother Ælfric, who mounted the throne on Eadwine's fall, threw off Christianity and set up again the faith of Woden.[1] But Osric reigned over Deira alone ; for the Englishmen of Bernicia seized on the defeat to break up the Northumbrian realm by throwing off the overlordship of their southern neighbours. They recalled the house of Ida ; and Eanfrith, a son of Æthelfrith, returned from his refuge among the Picts to be welcomed as their king. Bernicia, as we saw, had never received the faith of Eadwine ; and Eanfrith, though he had become a Christian at Hii, no sooner found himself among his people than like Osric he threw off the faith of Christ. The reigns of the two kings lasted one miserable year, a year whose shame was never forgotten among the Englishmen of the North. Penda indeed showed no inclination to follow up his victory by any attack on Northumbria ; he even gave shelter to one of Eadwine's sons, when he was driven out, after some vain struggle perhaps with Osric for the Deiran throne.[2] His aim was to complete his dominion over Mid-Britain ; he had in fact fought with Eadwine only to isolate East-Anglia ; and it was East-Anglia that he attacked in the year after the battle at Hatfield, in 634. Before the threat of his attack King Sigeberht had withdrawn from his throne to a monastery. His people dragged him back however from his cell as Penda approached, in faith that his presence would

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1.   [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

BRITAIN IN 634.

Scale of Miles.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

BERNICIANS

Cumbria

DEIRANS

Lindiswara

North Welsh

SUPREMACY

Dee-sexan
West Hepa
of Merce

Snotinga
Middle
Engle

North Folk

East Engle

WYRE

OF PENDA

Syrwas

South Folk

Hecana

Hwiccas

East Saxons

DEAN

WEST SAXONS

East Saxons

Middle
Sexe

Surrey

KENT

SELWOOD

ANDREDSWEAL

South Saxons

West Wales

Stanford's Geograph¹ Estab¹

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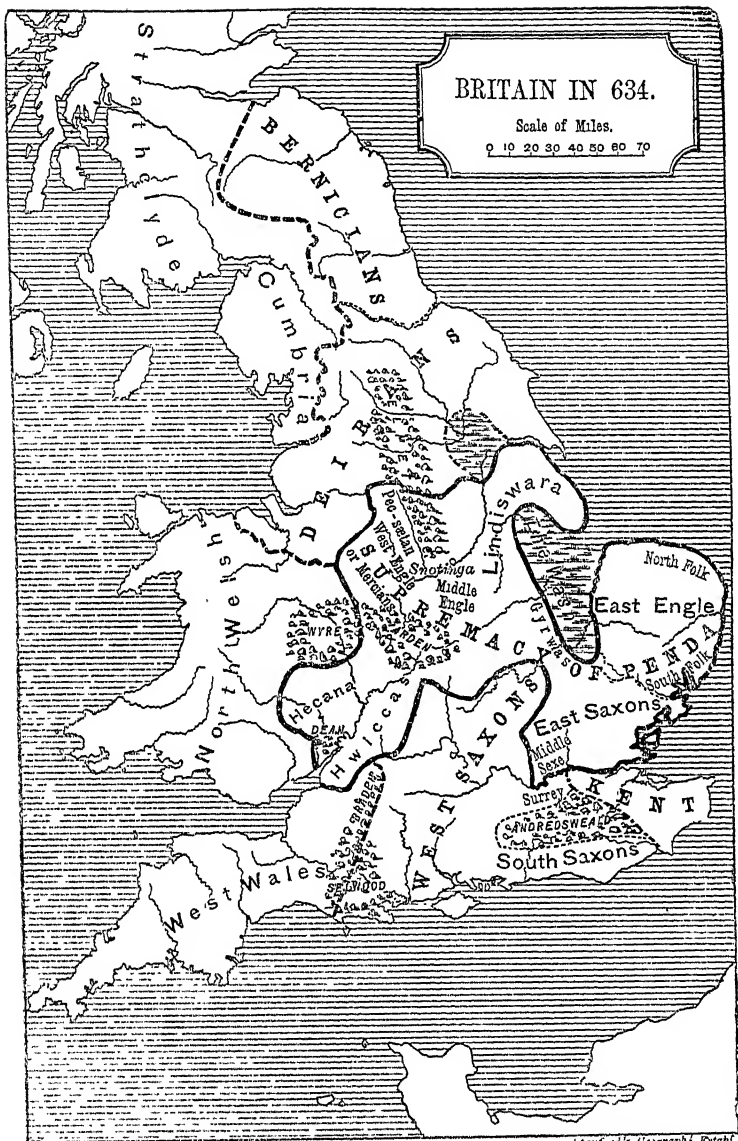
bring them the favour of Heaven ; but though the monk-king was set in the forefront of the host he would bear no weapon save a wand ; and his fall was followed by the rout of his army and the submission of his kingdom.[1] It remained Christian indeed, for his brother Anna who followed him on the throne was as zealous for the faith as Sigeberht ; but Anna only reigned as an under-king ; and East-Anglia became part of the overlordship of Penda.

Battle of the Hevenfeld.

If Penda had withdrawn however, Cadwallon remained harrying in the heart of Deira, and made himself master even of York.[2] Osric fell in an attempt to recover the town ; and even the Bernician Eanfrith, while suing for peace was murdered by the British king. But the triumph of the Britons was as brief as it was strange. Oswald, a second son of Æthelfrith, left Hii on his brother's death to place himself at the head of his race ; and in 635 a small force gathered round the new king near the Roman Wall.[3] The host of the Bernicians was heathen as of old, and of Oswald's force none were Christians save twelve nobles who had followed him from Hii, and who, like himself, had been converted during their exile. But Oswald had no mind to cast away his faith like his brother Eanfrith. On the night before the battle a dream came to his aid. He saw the tall form of the founder of Hii, Colomba, shrouding with its mantle almost the whole English camp, while his mighty

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18, 19.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1. I take the " Oppido municipio " here to be York.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 2.

voice bade the king " Be strong, and do like a man ;
lo ! I am with thee." [1]   As Oswald woke he gathered
his Witan to tell them the vision ; and with the quick
enthusiasm of a moment of peril the whole host
pledged itself to become Christian if it conquered
in the fight.   Obedient to the counsel Colomba had
given him in his dream, the king stole out from his
camp on the following night, and fell with the dawn
on the host of Cadwallon.   Legend told how Oswald
set up a cross of wood as his standard ere the fight
began,[2] holding it with his own hands till the hollow
in which it was fixed was filled by his soldiers, and
how then, throwing himself on his knees, the king
cried to his host to pray to the living God.   They
rose to fall upon the Britons.   The surprise seems to
have been complete.   The Welsh were cut to pieces.
Cadwallon fell fighting on the "Heaven's field," as
after times called the field of battle, and the fall of
this last great hero of the British race left the English-
men of Bernicia supreme in the north.[3]

The victory of the Heaven-field indeed is memorable *Its results.*
as the close of the last rally which the Britons ever
made against their conquerors.   Through more than
fifty years, from the battle of Faddiley to the fall of
Cadwallon, they had seemed at last strong enough
to turn the tide of victory.   In the south they had
struck down Ceawlin and penetrated to the very heart
of Wessex.   In Central Britain they had long held
the Mercians at bay even along the weak frontier of

[1] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 14—16.
[2] This cross was still standing in Bæda's time (H. E. iii. 2).
[3] Engl. Chron. a. 635 ; Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 1.

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the watershed of the Trent. Even in the north, though their strongest combination had been crushed at Dægsastan, and their line fatally broken by the overthrow of Chester, they had at last succeeded in defeating Eadwine, in breaking up the realm of Northumbria, and in encamping as victors for a whole year on its soil. But with the battle of the Heaven-field this rally came to an end. The strength of the Welsh was exhausted ; and henceforth their work was simply a long struggle of self-defence. To England the battle was of even larger import. It restored in great part the political work of Eadwine ; for Deira submitted to Æthelric's grandson as it had submitted to Æthelric, and the Northumbrian kingdom found itself restored in the firm hands of Oswald.[1] But it did more than restore his religious work. The conversion of the Bernicians gave Northumbria a religious unity such as it had never known till now, and with this unity Christianity rose to a yet more vigorous life. It came indeed in a different form from the Christianity of Eadwine ; for it was not the Church of Paulinus which had nerved Oswald to his struggle for the cross, or which carried out in Bernicia the work of Christianization which his victory began. Paulinus, as we have seen, had fled southwards at Eadwine's fall ; and the Roman Church, though safely established in Kent, ceased to struggle elsewhere against the heathen reaction. From that moment its place in the conversion of northern England was taken by missionaries

[1] As a son of Eadwine's sister, Acha, Oswald partly shared the royal blood of Deira, and would thus be more acceptable to the Deirans than his father.

from a land which was henceforth to play a part in
English history.

A Roman general, Agricola, as he gazed from the
western coast of Britain across the channel which
parted the two countries, had planned, as the last
of his exploits, the conquest of Ireland. But the
threat of Roman invasion was never carried out ; and
no foreign influence disturbed till a far later time the
social and political development of the Irish people.
In this way the tribal life which the Celts brought
with them from the plains of Asia went on in Ireland
as it went on nowhere else in the western world.
Two of the great physical agents indeed which brought
about its modification elsewhere were wanting, or all
but wanting, there. In other lands mountain ranges,
great river valleys, a varied distribution of hill and
plain, tended to throw smaller tribes together into
peoples and nations, and to form from their union a
corporate organization which widened and elevated
the sphere of human life and human action. Within
the tribe itself, on the other hand, an increase in the
culture of grain, above all in the culture of wheat,
did much to fix what had been a mere mass of
wandering herdsmen to particular spots, to make land
rather than kinship the basis of society, to turn the
sept into a village community, and thus to create new
and higher types of social and domestic life. But the
form and climate of Ireland offered almost insuperable
obstacles to the full development of either of these
processes of social growth. Ireland was an immense
plain, set indeed within a hilly coast-line and broken
by the course of the Shannon, by some lakes in the

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north, and by wide tracts of bog-land in the centre, but presenting over a vast area few of those natural features which could isolate one group of tribes from another. On the other hand, its moist climate and ceaseless rain made wheat-culture uncertain and profitless, while it spread before the herdsman the greenest and most tempting of pasture lands. Throughout its history therefore the island remained a huge grazing ground. The most famous of the old Irish tales is the story of a cattle-raid ; to drive off kine, indeed, was the main aim of the forays of tribe upon tribe. In Irish law fines, dues, rents, were all paid in live stock and generally in kine. Cattle were, in fact, to a very late time the chief Irish medium of exchange ; and even at the opening of the sixteenth century we find an Earl of Kildare paying twenty cows as the price of a book. It was by taking a grant, not as elsewhere of land, but of cattle, that the free tribesman became the man or vassal of an Irish chief. In all of this we have no doubt indications of a system of property which was common at some time of their history to every Aryan nation. The peculiarity of Ireland lay in the preservation of such a social state when it had passed away elsewhere ; and this preservation sprang from the nature of its climate and its soil.

Its institutions.   How primitive were the social institutions of the country may be seen from the character of its family life. Of polygamy indeed in households held together by the despotic power of the father, such as existed among the Celts in Gaul, we hear nothing among the Celts in Ireland. But temporary cohabitation

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remained even to the sixteenth century a recognized social usage, though no doubt an exceptional one, while provision was made for the legitimization, not only of bastards, but of a wife's children by other fathers than her husband. It was from usages such as these that domestic life rose throughout Europe to its later and more elevated forms ; but in Ireland the evolution was so slow as to remain for centuries almost imperceptible. In the same way life remained wholly pastoral or agricultural. Among the native tribes no approach was made to collective life in towns. Though the Irish village system differed little in form from the system which was a general heritage of the Aryan race, and which we have seen prevailing among our English forefathers, it remained based more on community of kindred than on community of land. Political life showed the same slowness of advance as social life. In the earlier Aryan community the chief seems to have been at once ruler, priest, and judge. In Ireland, as in Gaul, he remained simply ruler, while the professional lawmen or Brehons preserved and declared the mass of traditional customs which constituted Irish law. The structure of the nation remained purely tribal to the last days of its independence. We see indeed a faint tendency to union which elsewhere would have brought about a real national life. Common ties of descent sometimes bound tribes in confederacies like those which gathered at an early date round a common king of Cashel ; sometimes weak tribes grouped themselves round stronger, such as the O'Neils or the O'Donels at a later date in the north. From time to time even the

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promise of a national sovereignty rose out of the chaos of political life. But it never proved more than a promise. Traditional feeling owned the right to a general overlordship as existing in descendants of the house of Nial; legal theory gave this king of Ireland a king's seat at Tara, assigned to him Meath as his special domain, and asserted his right to receive tributes of cattle from lower chieftains. But strong as was the hold of this tradition, the supremacy of the King of Meath never became a lasting or effective force in Irish history.

Their slow development. The result of this peculiar temper of the Irish people was fated to be seen long ages after the time we have reached in the violent contrast which Ireland presented with other countries of the western world. To the Europe of the twelfth or the sixteenth century the island appeared simply a country of uncivilized barbarians. But neither in Irish politics nor in Irish society was there anything radically different from the political and social organization which we find in the early stages of other European communities. What distinguished Ireland from other nations was the slowness of its development as compared with theirs. Usages which elsewhere marked a remote antiquity lingered on here into historic time. The Brehon of the thirteenth century defined the law which applied to the bastard child of a married woman as minutely as his predecessor had done in the fifth. Though private possession slowly made its way, the system of common possession lasted up to the age of the Tudors as the main social feature of the country, and then was only violently put an end to

by the English lawyers. Law went on in a customary
form with little or no tendency to take statutory
shape. The system of justice never advanced from
the blood-fine which was originally common in all
early races to any general jurisdiction of the tribe.
Submission indeed even to the blood-fine, as to any
form of judicial interposition, remained voluntary to
the last among Irish disputants; and it was only
by a complicated system of distress that they could
be forced within the pale of the law.   It was the
same, as we have seen, with political life. In no tribe
did any principal of real cohesion develope itself
which could serve as the groundwork of national
union.   As in other lands, the chief increased in
power as time went on by the creation of a class
of vassals out of free tribesmen who sought or were
forced to take grants of cattle, as well as from the
settlement of refugees from one tribe within the
boundaries of another.   But to the last the power
of the Irish chieftains remained as weak for any real
purposes of government as it was effective for purposes
of oppression.[1]

At the time when the first Englishmen invaded *Patrick.*
Britain, the Scots, as the people of Ireland were then
called, were among the most formidable assailants
of the island.   In the raids of their pirate fleets on
its shores or on those of Gaul thousands of the
wretched provincials were swept off into slavery.
Among these captives was a boy whose work was
destined to leave a deep mark on the history and

[1] For the social condition of Ireland in these early times see
Sir Henry Maine's " Early History of Institutions."

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character of the wild tribesmen who carried him from his native land. At the time of his capture Patricius, or as the more modern form of his name runs, Patrick,[1] was nearly sixteen years old; and for ten more years he remained in Ireland as a slave. The years were years of conversion to a deeper sense of heavenly things. As he tended his master's kine, the young herdsman would often rise before daylight to pray in woods and mountain, even amidst frost and snow; " and I felt no ill," he says, " nor was there any sloth within me, because, as I see now, the Spirit was burning in me."[2] At last a dream raised in him the longing for freedom; he fled from his master's hand; and after hard wanderings found himself at home again. But, years later, he was driven to return to the land of his slavery. " In dead of night," he writes, " I saw a man coming to me as if from Ireland, whose name was Victorinus, and who bore countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of it, which contained the words, 'The voice of the Irish.' And while I was repeating the words of this beginning I thought I heard the voice of those who were near the wood Foclut, which is nigh to the western sea; and they cried thus : 'We pray thee, holy youth, to come and live among us henceforth.' And I was greatly pricked in heart, and could read no more."[3]

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[1] For a full criticism of the materials for Patrick's life, see Dr. Todd's " St. Patrick."

[2] Confessio S. Patricii, ap. S. Patricii Opuscula, ed. Villanueva (Dublin, 1835), p. 190.

[3] Confessio S. Patricii, ibid. p. 194.

Patrick woke to obey the words of his dream. He was ordained priest and bishop, and again landed on the shores of Ireland. But from the moment of his landing his life is lost in clouds of poetic legend. His work, however, was manfully done. By him or by his followers the island was quickly won for the faith of Christ : chieftains were converted, schools, churches, and monasteries were set up in every quarter. But the form which the new communion took was widely different from that which it took in other countries of the West. Elsewhere Christianity had been above all the religion of the Roman Empire. As it mastered the Roman provinces its organization moulded itself on the organization of the state. The administrative divisions of the one became the ecclesiastical divisions of the other. The prefect and vicar of the Empire were reflected in the archbishop and bishop of the Church. The town with its dependent tract of country became the diocese. The law-court was often turned into the church. Christianity was localized, organized, with officers, law, and discipline of its own, working side by side with and in fixed relation to the civil organization of the empire which adopted it. But in Ireland it found a very different sphere of action. Ireland had never formed a part of the Empire ; and instead of the centralized system of Imperial government, the missionaries found there, as we have seen, a mass of tribes linked together only by force or a vague tradition into varying groups around a central king, chieftains whose authority was personal over their clansmen rather than territorial over any definite tract of country, a land without towns or centres

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Character
of Irish
Church.

of civil judicature, or more than a crude though minute system of traditional law.

Little as we know of the first Christian missionaries in Ireland, we see from its results that their work moulded itself with a curious fidelity on the social forms which the island offered.[1] The conversion of every chieftain was followed by the adhesion of his tribe, and a tribal character was given from the outset to the nascent church. The monastic impulse which was becoming dominant in the Christian world at the time told nowhere with greater force. The Irish churches took a monastic form ; and the helpers and successors of Patrick became from the first abbots, each of them surrounded by a community of monks. But these monastic bodies were only centres of a tribal organization. In other countries of the West endowments of land fell to the local churches as they fell to guilds and voluntary civil societies of a similar class, and these endowments set them in the same rank of local corporations. In Ireland the grants given to the new monasteries and their superiors raised the abbot into the head of an artificial clan. He and his successors were not only heads of the spiritual community which gathered around them and was supported by these endowments, but chiefs of the new family in its civil capacity, and its bishops in a more spiritual aspect. As these ecclesiastical clans grew larger and more numerous their form modified itself, but still in the same peculiar way. Sometimes the successors of the original abbot divided his lay and spiritual authority. In such a case the

[1] Todd, "Life of St. Patrick," Introd.

community owned both a religious and a secular head.
The spritual coarb or heir, as the abbot was signifi-
cantly called, was chosen by the monks over whom
he presided, and the secular coarb by the tribesmen
at large ; though in both instances custom tended to
restrict the choice to the family of the original
founder. The office of bishop, too, generally detached
itself from that of abbot and sank into a subordinate
position. Without defined diocese or territorial posi-
tion, the Irish bishops were at last distinguished from
the rest of the clergy by no other marks than their
possession of the strictly spiritual powers of conse-
cration. Their number was enormous. Patrick was
said to have consecrated more than three hundred,
and a few centuries later they were believed to have
reached seven hundred. As they had neither settled
dioceses nor settled endowments their life was one of
poverty and lowliness. A bishop might be found
ploughing his own field by his own church. Another
might be seen wandering with a pet cow at his heels
through the country, without support save from the
fees he charged for ordination. On the other hand,
abbots of great monasteries like those of Durrow or
Clonmacnois ranked among the great powers of the
land. Kings quailed before their spiritual threats ;
they formed political combinations, and at need led
kinsfolk or tribesmen to the field.

While other churches of Western Christendom *Character* *of Irish* *Christianity.*
were organized on a national and episcopal basis, the
Irish Church was thus at once tribal and monastic.
Nor was it less different from them in character than
in form. In its temper as in its organization it was

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purely Celtic.   The work of its conversion was hardly
over when the conquest of Britain by the English
cut off Ireland from the western world, and hindered
the new community of religion from bringing it into
contact with the general temper of European civiliza-
tion.   Save the little group of its first missionaries,
even its earliest preachers were pure Irishmen, and
the Church they founded grew up purely Irish in
spirit as in form.   The Celtic passion, like the Celtic
anarchy stamped itself on Irish religion.   There was
something strangely picturesque in its asceticism, in
its terrible penances, its life-long fasts, its sudden
contrasts of wrath and pity, the sweetness and tender-
ness of its legends and hymns, the awful vindictive-
ness of its curses.   But in good as in ill its type
of moral conduct was utterly unlike that which
Christianity elsewhere developed.   It was wanting
in moral earnestness, in the sense of human dignity,
in self-command ; it showed little power over the
passions of anger and revenge ; it recognized spiritual
excellence in a rigid abstinence from sensual excess
and the repetition of countless hymns and count-
less litanies.   But on the other hand Ireland gave
to Christianity a force, a passionateness, a restless
energy, such as it had never known before.   It threw
around it something of the grace, the witchery, the
romance of the Irish temper.   It coloured even its
tenderness with the peculiar pathos of the Celt.

Its poetry.   The extravagance of the Irish saint-legends is broken
everywhere by gleams of a delicate evanescent poetry.
When the host of King Loegaire closes round Patrick
to kill him and his comrades, the eight missionaries

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vanish with the boy who followed them, and the host
sees but eight roe-deer and a fawn tripping away
to pasture. At another time two of the king's
daughters, Fedelm the Red and Ethne the White,
come down to a river-side to wash after the manner
of women, and find there the group of wandering
preachers.[1] "They knew not whence they came nor
from what people, but took them for fairy-folk of
the hills or earth, gods or phantoms." Patrick taught
them his faith and baptized them; but his words
woke a strange longing in the girls' hearts, and they
asked to see the face of Christ. "And Patrick said:
'Ye cannot see the face of Christ save ye taste of
death and take the Sacrifice of the Lord.' Then
they bade him give it them. And they received
God's eucharist and slept in death; and they were
laid out both in one bed covered with their garments,
and men made great dole and weeping over them."
It is this peculiar tenderness that gives its charm to
the love of living things that colours the legends
of Celtic saints. The Irish hermit talks with the
sea-birds who scream round his strip of sand-bank.
Colomba sits watching his reapers in the field and
caressing the head which a horse that had been feed-
ing hard by comes to thrust into his lap.[2] The legend
of Patrick linked an instance of his charity to animals
with the foundation of Armagh. When he came to
the spot he had chosen for his settlement, he found a
roe with her fawn lying in the place where the altar
of his church was afterwards to stand. His followers

[1] Extract from book of Armagh, in Todd's "St. Patrick," p. 452.
[2] Adamnan, "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 231.

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would have slain them, "but Patrick would not." He took up the fawn himself, carrying it on his shoulder; and the roe followed him like a pet lamb till he had laid down her fawn in another field.

It was this strange Christianity, strange alike in temper and in form, which began in the seventh century to leaven in a hundred different ways the Christianity of the West. When it bursts upon Western Christendom, it brought with it an enthusiasm, an energy, a learning greater than any that it found there. For while in Italy or Gaul or Spain Christianity had spent its vigour in a struggle for self-preservation against the heathen invaders, in winning them to its creed, in taming them by its discipline, in bringing to bear on them the civilization which it had alone preserved through the storm of conquest, Ireland, unscourged by assailants, drew from its conversion a life and movement such as it has never known since. The science and Biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in famous schools which made Durrow and Armagh Universities of the West. The new Christian life soon beat too strongly to brook confinement within the bounds of Ireland itself. Patrick had not been a century dead when Irish Christianity flung itself with a fiery zeal into battle with the mass of heathenism which was rolling in elsewhere upon the Christian world. Irish missionaries laboured among the Picts of the Highlands and among the Frisians of the northern seas. An Irish missionary, Columban, founded monasteries in Burgundy and the Apennines. The Canton of St. Gall still commemorates in its

name another Irish missionary before whom the CHAP. VI.
spirits of flood and fell fled wailing over the waters
of the Lake of Constance. For a time it seemed
as if the course of the world's history was to be
changed, as if the older Celtic race that Roman and
German had driven before them had turned to the
moral conquest of their conquerors, as if Celtic and
not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies
of the Churches of the West.

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On a low island of barren gneiss-rock off the west
coast of Scotland the Irishman Colom or Colomba
set up a mission station for the Picts at Hii ;[1] and
it was within the walls of this monastery that Oswald
with his brothers had found refuge on their father's
fall.[2] As soon as he was master of Northumbria, he
naturally called for missionaries from among its
monks. The first preacher sent in answer to his
call obtained small success : he declared indeed on
his return that among a people so stubborn and
barbarous as these Northumbrian folk success was
impossible. " Was it their stubbornness, or your
harshness ? " asked Aidan, a brother sitting by ; " did
you forget God's word to give them the milk first and
then the meat ? "[3] All eyes turned on the speaker as
fittest to undertake the abandoned mission, and Aidan
sailing at their bidding fixed his bishop's stool or see
in 635 on the coast of Northumbria, in the island-
peninsula of Lindisfarne.[4] Thence, from a monastery

<div style="text-align:right">Irish
missionaries
in
Northumbria.</div>

[1] Adamnan, " Life of Columba," ed. Reeves, p. 434.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 5. The name in Irish form is Aedhan.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.

<div style="text-align:center">U</div>

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which gave to the spot its after name of Holy Island, preachers poured forth over the heathen realm. Boisil guided a little troop of missionaries to the valley of the Tweed. Aidan himself wandered on foot, preaching among the peasants of Bernicia. In his own court the king acted as interpreter to the Irish missionaries in their efforts to convert his thegns.[1] A new conception of kingship indeed began to blend itself with that of the warlike glory of Æthelfrith or the wise administration of Eadwine, and the moral power which was to reach its height in Ælfred first dawns in the story of Oswald. For after times the memory of Oswald's greatness was lost in the memory of his piety. "By reason of his constant habit of praying or giving thanks to the Lord he was wont wherever he sat to hold his hands upturned on his knees."[2] As he feasted with Bishop Aidan by his side the thegn whom he had set to give alms to the poor at his gate told him of a multitude that waited fasting without. The king at once bade the untasted meat be carried to the poor and his silver dish be divided piecemeal among them. Aidan seized the royal hand and blessed it. "May this hand," he cried, "never grow old!"[3]

Oswald.   But if Oswald was a saint, he was none the less resolved to build up again a power such as that of Eadwine. His earlier efforts to widen his dominion seem to have been mainly in the north-west. Here his sway not only stretched over the Britons who

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 12.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 6.

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formed the mass of the population in the district
between Chester and the Ribble, but it is probable
that he was owned as overlord by the Welsh kingdom
of Strath-Clyde; for otherwise he could hardly have
gone on to "receive into his lordship"[1] the Picts
and the Dalriad Scots across the Forth.   In southern
Britain   his   success   seems   to   have   been   more
chequered.   It may be doubted whether Mercia or
the tribes along the Trent yielded more than a
nominal submission to him,[2] but Penda must have
shrunk for the while from any open struggle, for at
the pressure of Oswald[3] he murdered Eadfrid, the
second son of Eadwine by his Mercian wife Quænburh,
who had for a while found refuge at his court.
Kent too yielded to the same pressure, and drove
Eadwine's children by Æthelberga to a refuge in
Gaul.[4] In these realms, however, Oswald could hardly
claim any direct overlordship, but elsewhere he was
able to restore the realm of Eadwine.   His arms
wrested an acknowledgment of subjection from the
Lindiswaras, after a struggle whose fierceness was
shown by the bitter memory it left behind it among
the conquered people.[5]   East-Anglia, which had
remained   Christian   amidst   the   heathen   reaction

[1] " Omnes nationes et provincias Brittanniæ, quæ in quatuor
linguas, id est : Brittonum, Pictorum, Scottorum, et Anglorum,
divisæ sunt, in ditione accepit."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 6.

[2] Some submission there must have been, for Bæda says that
Oswald " hisdem finibus regnum tenuit " as Eadwine, which he has
carefully specified.   (H. E. ii. c. 5.)

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 11.

BRITAIN IN 640.

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

GUMANS

Cumbrians

Ouse

Northweys

Lindiswara

Poecsaetan
West Engle
Markmans
Snotingas
Middle
Engle

KINGDOM
WYRE GARDEN
Hecana
OF PENDA
DEAN
Hwiccan

North Wales

Saxons

SUPREMACY

North Folk
East
Engle
South Folk

East
Saxons
Middle
Sexe
Surrey
KENT
ANDREDSWEALD

West Wales

SELWOOD
West Saxons
South Saxons

Stanford's Geograph¹ Estab¹

elsewhere, after the fall of Eadwine, seems still to have

remained subject to Penda; but in the south Oswald

succeeded in effectually restoring the Northum-
brian supremacy. The battle of Cirencester and the
loss of the country of the Hwiccas had taught
the West-Saxons to look on Mercia as their most
dangerous foe : and they were ready to seek aid
against it in recognizing the overlordship of Oswald.
Here again the new religion served as a prelude to
the Northumbrian advance. Immediately after the
victory of the Hevenfeld, in 635, Wessex declared
itself Christian. The work of a preacher, Birinus,
who had penetrated from Gaul into Wessex, proved
so effective that king Cynegils received baptism in
Oswald's presence and established with his assent a
see for his people in the royal city of Dorchester on
the Thames.[1]

It was this supremacy over so wide a ring of subject
peoples which seemed to lift Oswald out of the rank
of Kings. In him, even more than in Eadwine, men

saw some faint likeness of the older Emperors. Once
indeed, a writer from the land of the Picts, the abbot
Adamnan of Hii, calls Oswald "Emperor of the whole
of Britain."[2] But great as he was, the doom of
Oswald was fated to be that of Eadwine. Though
the conversion of Wessex had prisoned it within the
central districts of England, heathendom fought
desperately for life. Penda remained its rallying-
point ; and the long reign of the Mercian king was in
fact one continuous battle with the Cross. But so

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.
[2] Adamnan's "Life of Columba," ed. Reeves. p. 16.

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far as we can judge from his acts, Penda seems to have looked on the strife of religion in a purely political light. Christianity meant in fact either subjection to, or alliance with, Oswald; and the Northumbrian supremacy was again threatening his dominion on almost every border when Penda resolved to break through the net which was closing round him. The point of conflict, as before, seems to have been the dominion over East-Anglia. Its possession was as vital to Mid-Britain as it was to Northumbria, which needed it to link itself with its West-Saxon subjects in the south; and Oswald must have felt that he was challenging his rival to a decisive combat when he marched, in 642, to deliver the East-Anglians from Penda. But his doom was that of Eadwine; for he was overthrown and slain in a battle called the battle of the Maserfeld.[1] His last words showed how deeply the spirit of the new faith was telling on the temper of Englishmen. The last thought of every northern warrior as he fell had till now been a hope that kinsmen would avenge his death upon his slayers. The king's last words, as he saw himself girt about with blood-thirsty foes, passed into a proverb: "God have mercy on their souls, as Oswald said ere he fell."[2] His body was mutilated and his limbs set on stakes by the brutal conqueror;[3] but legend told that, when all else of Oswald had perished, the hand that Aidan had blessed still remained white and uncorrupted.[4]

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[1] Engl. Chron. a. 642; Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 9.
[2] Bæda, H. E. iii. 12.   [3] Bæda, H. E. iii. 13.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 6.

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Oswiu.

For a few years after his victory at the Maserfeld Penda stood supreme in Britain. Wessex must have been forced to own his supremacy;[1] for its king, Cenwealh, threw off the Christian faith and married Penda's sister. East-Anglia and Central Britain remained under Mercian sway, while the Northumbrian realm was a third time broken up, for even the men of Deira seem to have bent their necks to Penda, and Oswini, the son of Osric, whom they took for their king in a rising on Oswald's fall, was a mere under-king of the Mercian overlord.[2] Bernicia alone refused to yield. Year by year Penda carried his ravages over the north; once he reached even the royal city, the impregnable rock-fortress of Bamborough. Despairing of success in an assault, he pulled down the cottages around, and, piling their wood against its walls, fired the mass in a fair wind that drove the flames on the town. "See, Lord, what ill Penda is doing,"[3] cried Aidan from his hermit cell in the islet of Farne, as he saw the smoke drifting over the city; and a change of wind—so ran the legend of Northumbria's agony—drove back at the words the flames on those who kindled them. But, burnt and harried as it was, Bernicia still clung to the Cross. Oswiu, a third son of Æthelfrith, who had been called from Hii in 642 to fill the throne of his brother Oswald, gave little promise in his earlier days of those qualities which were to make his later reign a landmark in our history.[4] During the first

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7. [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 16. [4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.

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nine years of his reign indeed, he was king only of Bernicia, and over Bernicia the host of Penda poured summer after summer in the terrible raids which we have described. But terrible as they were, Oswiu held stoutly to his ground ; and after some years he found himself not only master of his own people, but able to build up again the wider realm of the Northumbrians.

Restoration of Northumbria. Oswini, who had occupied the Deiran throne since the fight at the Maserfeld, was a son of that Osric who had reigned for the miserable year which followed Eadwine's defeat at Hæthfeld. But the religious activity of Oswald and of Aidan had done its work. Unlike his father, Oswini was a Christian to the core ; and his piety and humility won the love of Aidan, as his personal beauty and liberality won the love of his people.[1] But neither the one love nor the other could avert the young king's doom. A marriage which Oswiu concluded showed his purpose of recovering Deira. Eadwine's younger children by his Kentish queen had been carried by her after her fall to her Kentish home ;[2] and the death of two of them left the girl Eanfled the representative of his line. Oswiu took Eanfled to wife as his father Æthelfrith had taken her aunt Acha ; and in the one case as in the other the match had a political aim, that of neutralizing the loyalty of the men of Deira to the line of Ælla. It was in fact followed in 651 by the march of the Bernician king to the south. The news of Oswiu's approach with an overpowering

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 14.
[2] Bæda, ii. 20. Really two children and one grandchild.

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host filled Oswini with despair, a despair quickened
no doubt by consciousness of the treachery which
was at work among his subjects ; he fled to the house
of an Ealdorman near Richmond, and was betrayed
by him to a thegn whom Oswiu despatched to kill
him.[1]   The blow broke Aidan's heart ; and twelve
days after it the bishop lay dying among his brethren
at Lindisfarne.   Far off, on the sheep-walks of the
Lammermoor, a shepherd-boy named Cuthbert, des-
tined afterwards to a wider fame, saw stars falling
thick over the sky into the sea, and took them for
angels carrying homeward the soul of Bishop Aidan.
But the fall of Oswini left Oswiu master of Deira ;
and Northumbria rose anew from the union of the
two northern states, a union which was never hence-
forth to be dissolved.   Oswini was the last male of the
old kingly stock of Deira ; and with the extinction
of their regal line passed away the reluctance of the
Deirans to submit to the house of Ida.   The restora-
tion of the Northumbrian realm left Oswiu supreme
from the Humber to the Forth ; and a great part of
the Welsh, of the Picts, and of the Scots, on his
western and northern border, not only bowed to his
overlordship as they had bowed to Oswald's, but even
owned their subjection by payment of tribute.[2]

But the reconstruction of the Northumbrian king-
dom was hardly brought about when a succession of
events in central Britain showed that Oswiu had
taken up again the wider task of Oswald and Eadwine.
In the year after the annexation of Deira, in 652,[3]

*Oswiu
and
Penda.*

[1] Bæda, H. E. iii. c. 14.   [2] Bæda, H. E. ii. 5.

[3] Bæda does not date the wooing of Peada or the conversion

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Penda's son Peada, whom his father had set as under-king over the Middle-English or Leicestermen, sought Oswiu's daughter Alchfleda to wife. The two royal houses were already linked by marriage, for Penda's daughter was the wife of Oswiu's son, Alchfrith ; and Alchfrith's persuasion won over Peada to Christianity as the price of his sister's hand. He was baptized by Bishop Finan, Aidan's successor in the See of Lindisfarne,[1] and the priests whom Peada brought back with him preached busily and successfully not only among his own subjects, but ventured in the following year to penetrate even among the Mercians themselves. Penda gave them no hindrance. In words which mark the temper of a man of whom we would willingly know more, Bæda tells us that the old king [2] only "hated and scorned those whom he saw not doing the works of the faith they had received."[3]   "They were miserable and scornworthy men," he said, "who shrank from obeying the God in whom they trusted." His attitude proves that Penda looked with the tolerance of his race on all questions of creed, and that he fought not for heathendom, but for independence. If he struck down Eadwine and Oswald, it was not because their missionaries spread along the eastern

of the Mid-Engle, but as they followed the annexation of Deira and preceded the further attempts to convert the Mercians themselves, which he puts in 653 ("cœpta sunt hæc biennio ante mortem Pendæ regis," Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21), we must assign them to 652.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

[2] If he was fifty at his accession in 626, he was nearly eighty when he fell at the Winwæd.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

coast, but because their lordship spread with their
missionaries. Quietly therefore as he watched the
spread of the new religion among his own people, he
may have watched with jealousy the conversion of
Essex, which took place in the same year that the
Northumbrian preachers appeared on the upper Trent.
The throwing off of Christianity and of the Kentish
supremacy by the two young kings of the East-
Saxons in the days of Bishop Mellitus had been
quickly followed by their fall in a disastrous conflict
with the West-Sexe;[1] but we do not again catch
sight of the little realm till we find at this moment
its king Sigeberht a friend and guest of Oswiu's in
the king's vill by the Roman Wall. The pressure of
Oswiu[2] brought about Sigeberht's baptism and con-
version, and his return to his people was followed by
Oswiu's despatch of the missionary Cedd, who was
working among the Middle-Engle, to this new work
on the eastern coast.[3]

The extension of Oswiu's influence over Essex was *Penda and the East-Engle.*
obviously a prelude to a renewal of the old strife be-
tween Penda and Northumbria for the domination
over East-Anglia. Now as before the supremacy over

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5. The Gewissas may have been
tempted to replace Æthelberht's overlordship by their own, or
it is possible that the strife sprang simply from the loose and
unfixed character of the frontier between the two peoples. (See
Stubbs in Dic. Christ. Biog. vol. ii. 20.) The liberty of S.
Alban's may represent the waste "mark" between East- and
West-Sexe.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22, "instantia regis Oswiu."

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22. Cedd's movements fix the date of
these events in 653.

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East-Anglia was essential to the wider supremacy of Northumbria over the centre of the island. For the new state of Mid-Britain it was more ; it was a question of life and death. Without the East-Engle the power which had again and again grouped itself round Æthelberht and Rædwald and Penda must cease to exist. On the other hand the East-Engle were still averse from the rule of their fellow Engle in the west ; and now that dependencies of Oswiu's lay on either side of them they would naturally begin to stir. There can be little doubt that Penda's fresh [1] attack on them in 654, an attack in which Sige-berht's successor Anna was slain and his kingdom cruelly ravaged, was the result of a fresh attempt at revolt. A third brother, Æthelhere, bowed anew to the Mercian yoke, and marched among the soldiers of Penda. Æthelhere, we know not how, was the cause of the war [2] which followed with Northumbria. It is possible that the under-king endeavoured to win in-dependence by playing off the two great powers on either side of him against one another. But that Oswiu strove to avert the conflict we see from the delivery of his youngest son Ecgfrith as a hostage into Penda's hands. The sacrifice however proved useless. Penda was again the assailant, and his attack was as vigorous as of old. He was aided too by internal dissension in the Northumbrian realm. Oidilwald, a son of Oswald, had been set by Oswiu[3] as an under-king over at least part of Deira ; but in this crisis

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18.   For date, see Hussey's note.

[2] " Auctor ipse belli."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23, 24.

he joined the Mercians, and his defection opened a way for Penda's march into the heart of the land.

The old king again passed ravaging over the country as far northward as Bamborough, " destroying all he could with fire and sword ; "[1] while Oswiu, unable to meet him in the field, was driven by need to seek for peace. Penda however set roughly aside the gifts which the king offered ; he had resolved, so men believed, to root out and destroy the whole people of the Northumbrians. But broken as they were, despair gave strength to the men of the north. A small host gathered round Oswiu, and the king vowed—should the day be his—to give his daughter to God and to found twelve monasteries. " Since the pagan·will not take our gifts," he said, " let us offer them to One that will." Success however seemed hopeless, for when Oswiu met the Mercian army near the river Winwæd in 655 he found it thrice as strong as his own. Thirty ealdormen followed Penda ; Æthelhere brought his East Anglians to his aid, and Oidilwald the men of Eastern Deira. Never had the odds seemed more unequal, but never was an overthrow more complete. Oidilwald proved as faithless to Penda as he had proved to Oswiu ; he drew off his men in the midst of the fight and waited for its issue. It ended in the rout and slaughter of the Mercians. Great rains had swelled the river in the rear of their broken host, " and more were drowned in their flight than fell by the sword." But the noblest of the Mercian warriors remained on the field.[2] Of the thirty

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 17.   [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

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ealdormen who marched at Penda's bidding hardly one was left alive, Æthelhere fell fighting in the midst of his East-Englishmen, and Penda himself was slain. "In the river Winwæd," rang out the triumphant battle-song of the conquerors :—

> " In the river Winwæd is avenged the slaughter of Anna,
> The slaughter of the kings Sigberht and Ecgrice,
> The slaughter of the kings Oswald and Edwine." [1]

Fall of Mercia.

For the moment the ruin of Mercia seemed complete. The supremacy it had won over its neighbours to the south must have passed away with the great defeat. The West-Saxons resumed their old independence, and the force which they gained from this deliverance spurred them to take up again their long interrupted advance against the Britons in the west. In 655 a victory at Bradford on the Avon drove the Welsh from their stronghold in the woodlands which ran like a wedge into West-Saxon land up the valley of the Frome, and a second campaign three years later settled the West-Saxons as conquerors round the sources of the Parrett. But the loss of outer influence was little beside the internal ruin of the Mercian state itself. The power which had grown up in Central Britain crumbled beneath Oswiu's blow. The peoples whom Penda had brought together sheered off into their old isolation. East-Anglia, the actual prize of the contest, naturally found a new overlord in Oswiu. Lindsey passed under the direct rule of the Northumbrian conqueror, and if the Southumbrians

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[1] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl., ed. Arnold, p. 60, has preserved this snatch of English song.

about Nottingham escaped the same fate, it was by
their revival as a distinct kingdom, though subject, no
doubt, to the overlord in the north.   The removal
of Peada from his sovereignty over the Middle-
English of Leicester shows that these too, probably
with their neighbours the South-English of North-
ampton, were freed from the supremacy of Mercia.
The Mercian people itself, reduced as it thus was to
its original settlement along the upper Trent, lost
its national unity.   Its old division into a North-
Mercian and a South-Mercian folk reappeared,[1] whether
from civil strife which followed on the great defeat,
or as a part of the policy of their conqueror.   The
larger part of the Mercian people, the North-Mercians
who dwelt on the north side of the Trent, were made
directly subject to Northumbria.   The South-Mercians
alone remained under the rule of Peada ; but Peada
only received his kingship over them as a gift from
Oswiu,[2] and that not because he was of the kingly
stock, but because he was bound to Oswiu by the
ties of his marriage and his Christian faith.

Oswiu on the other hand was sovereign over
Britain as no English king save Eadwine had been
before him.[3]   The supremacy of Northumbria over the

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*Supremacy
of Oswiu.*

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 24.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24 : "Donavit (Oswiu) Peada . . . .
eo quod esset cognatus suus, regnum australium Merciorum."

[3] Bæda, lib. iii. c. 24 : "Tribus annis post occisionem Pendan
regis, Merciorum genti, necnon et cæteris australium provinciarum
populis præfuit, qui etiam gentem Pictorum maxima ex parte regno
Anglorum subjecit."   So Bæda, H. E. ii. 5, says of Oswiu :
"Æqualibus pene terminis (as those of Oswald and Eadwine),
regnum nonnullo tempore coercens, Pictorum quoque atque

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Britons of Cumbria and Strath-Clyde was restored. The Picts and Scots of the north were forced to pay tribute. In Mid-Britain Oswiu no longer saw a power growing fast into a danger, but a mass of broken peoples, all of them in some way owing him obedience. Over Lindsey, the men of North-Mercia, and the South-English, he must have ruled for the moment in direct sovereignty;[1] while the petty kingdom of the Southumbrians, the larger realms of the East-Anglians and the East-Saxons, probably the West-Saxons themselves, owned his supremacy. North-umbria itself too was finally made. The royal stock of Deira had come to an end, and with its extinction passed away the strife between the men of Bernicia. From Oswiu's day all the Englishmen of the north were simply Northumbrians, and this inner unity gave fresh weight to the political influence which the kingdom exerted outside its own bounds.

*Revival
of
Mercia.*

But the dream of a single people gathered together around the kings of Northumbria no sooner seemed realized than it vanished for ever away. Peada had scarcely received the gift of the South-Mercian realm when his death tempted Oswiu to complete his mastery of Central Britain by annexing even the small folk that the young king had ruled. For three years the Mercians bore this foreign rule; but in 659 the whole people broke out in revolt, drove

Scottorum gentes, quæ septemtrionales Brittaniæ fines tenent, maximâ ex parte perdomuit ac tributarias fecit."
[1] " Ipso (Penda) occiso, cum Oswiu rex Christianus regnum ejus acciperet."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 21.

BRITAIN IN 658.

Scale of Miles.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

SUPREMACHAOFOF

North

Cumbria

North Wales

West Wales

Hwicca

Hecana

RYRE

WEST SAXONS

West Engle or Mercians

Pec-sætan

Middle Engle

Hotingas

Gyrwas

Lindiswara

South Engle

Middle Sexe

Surrey

ANDREDSWEALD

South Saxons

KENT

East Saxons

East Engle

North Folk

South Folk

SELWOOD

X
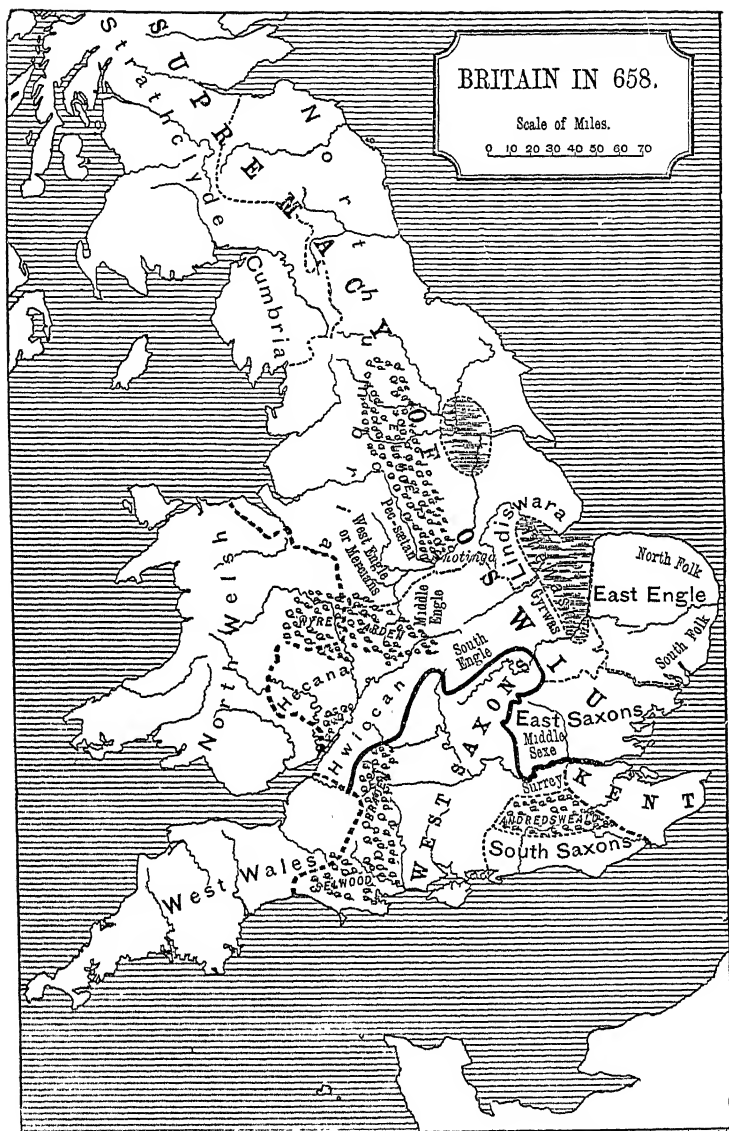
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Oswiu's thegns from the land, and raised a younger
son of Penda, who had till now remained in hiding,
to the throne.[1]   Under its new king, Wulfhere, Mercia
rose at once into a power greater than that of Penda ;
and which it would need a greater victory than that
of the Winwæd to overthrow. But the revolution
marked more than the revival of Mercia.   It marked
the abandonment by Northumbria of her long efforts
to carry her supremacy over the rest of Britain. So
irresistible had been the movement of revolt that
Oswiu seems to have acquiesced without a struggle
in the overthrow of his rule, and to have contented
himself for the few remaining years of his life with a
nominal overlordship across the Humber.   Even this
passed away at his death in 670 ; and his successors
sank into merely local sovereigns.[2]   Whatever bicker-

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24.

[2] Bæda, lib. ii., ends his list of those who held an imperium
with Oswiu. Æthelberht of Kent "tertius quidem in regibus
gentis Anglorum, cunctis australibus eorum provinciis quæ
Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus
imperavit ; sed primus omnium cælestia regna conscendit.   Nam
primus imperium hujusmodi Ælli rex Australium Saxonum ;
secundus Cælin rex Occidentalium Saxonum, qui linguâ eorum
Ceaulin vocabatur ; tertius, ut dixi, Ædilberct rex Cantuari-
orum ; quartus Redwald rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam
vivente Ædilbercto eidem suæ genti ducatum præbebat, ob-
tinuit ; quintus Æduin rex Nordanhymbrorum gentis, id est,
ejus quæ ad borealem Humbræ fluminis plagam inhabitat,
majore potentia cunctis qui Brittaniam incolunt, Anglorum
pariter et Brittonum populis præfuit, præter Cantuariis tantum ;
necnon et Mevanias Brittonum insulas, quæ inter Hiberniam et
Brittaniam sitæ sunt, Anglorum subjecit imperio ; sextus
Osuald et ipse Nordanhymbrorum rex Christianissimus, hisdem
finibus regnum tenuit ; septimus Oswiu frater ejus, æqualibus

ings over a border province there might be with Mercia,
no Northumbrian king from that time made any effort

pene terminis regnum nonnullo tempore coercens, Pictorum
quoque atque Scottorum gentes, quæ septemtrionales Brittaniæ
fines tenuit, maxima ex parte perdomuit, ac tributarias fecit "
(Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 5). In the middle of the ninth century
the clerk of Winchester who threw together the earlier entries
of the English Chronicle, when he reached his entry for the year
827, " In this year king Ecgberht conquered the Mercian
kingdom and all that was south of Humber," added, " and he
was the eighth king that was Bretwalda." Then copying from
Bæda this list of names from Ælla to Oswiu he adds at the
close of it, " the eighth was Ecgberht, king of the West-Saxons."
The two passages together form the ground of Sir F. Palgrave's
theory of a derivation of the Roman imperial authority through
Maximus, &c., to Ælla and Ecgberht, which is examined and
dismissed by Mr. Freeman (" Norman Conquest," vol. i. appendix,
note B), and of Mr. Freeman's own theory of the Bretwalda-
dom, in which the imperium of Bæda is made to mean " a real
though not an abiding or a very well defined supremacy which
was often, perhaps generally, held by some one of the Teutonic
princes of Britain over as many of his neighbours, Celtic and
Teutonic alike, as he could extend it over." The little word
Celtic in this very cautiously expressed passage is no doubt big
enough to serve as a base for the theory of an imperial character
which Mr. Freeman attributes to the rule of the later West-
Saxon kings through their supremacy over the Celtic peoples
about them. Such a theory in the case of the later monarchy
may be true or false ; but in applying it to the kings in Bæda's
list we seem to me to be going beyond the evidence we possess.
As to the title Bretwalda, there is no ground for assuming it to
be earlier than the date at which we first find it in the Chronicle,
or for giving it, with Swithun's clerk, to these earlier rulers.
The silence not only of Bæda but of every historical document
or charter up to the ninth century is surely fatal to any theory
of its official existence at this time. Nor can we attach any
great weight to the historical knowledge of the writer who
attributes it to Ælla and Oswiu, when we find that as soon as he
comes to the end of Bæda's list the chronicler leaps over a

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to crush the rival states in Central or Southern Britain ; the threefold division of the conquered land was century and a half of our history, and over kings such as Æthelbald and Offa, to pin his own sovereign Ecgberht on to the close of it. But if we set aside the word Bretwalda, and the theories which I believe its incorrect rendering as "ruler of the Britons" first gathered round it, and restrict ourselves to the meaning of Bæda's Imperium, the matter becomes very much simpler. Bæda himself explains the Imperium as a Ducatus, the position that is of a here-toga or war-leader. There is no historic ground in the case of the first four kings in his list for extending such a war-leadership over any Britons at all. In the case of Ælla, indeed, Mr. Freeman admits such a supposition to be impossible. But the passages which show that in Ælla's later days the attacks of the Gewissas on the coast of the Gwent were supported by forces from Kent and Sussex make it at any rate possible that this union of the three peoples in their attack was under the war-leadership of this king, who must at that time have held the highest position among the conquering tribes. Of Ceawlin in this respect we know nothing ; but Bæda has carefully defined for us the limits both of Æthelberht's and Rædwald's supremacy, and in neither case is any British people included within it. In their cases the imperium must have meant a supremacy or war-leadership over Englishmen alone ; and it is in this sense, therefore, that we must apply the word to Eadwine, Oswald, and Oswiu, though these three Northumbrian kings undoubtedly had British peoples among their tributaries. I am inclined to think that the chronicler's entry came about in a very simple way. In the passage of Bæda which lay before him he read that Æthelberht, "cunctis australibus eorum provinciis qui Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imparavit." Here, as in so many cases throughout his book, Bæda is distinguishing between the "Nordanhymbri" and the "Sudanhymbri," the Engle north of the Humber, and the Engle south of it, to the exclusion of the Kentishmen and the various Saxon tribes. What he points out is, that it was over the southern Engle—the Engle, that is, of Mid-Britain or the later Mercia—that Æthelberht's imperium extended, and it was over the same district that Rædwald's

accepted as a settled fact by the statesmen of the
north; and if they henceforth sought to widen their
borders it was not by conquests over Englishmen,
but by conquests over Cumbrian or Pict.

imperium extended after him.   Now if we look at the chronicler's
entry we shall see that it was not when the Kentishmen sub-
mitted to him in 823, or when he completed his conquests by the
annexation of Northumbria, that the writer tags Ecgberht on to
the Bretwaldas, but when in the interval between them he con-
quered "the kingdom of the Mercians and all that was south of
the Humber."   The chronicler's own words probably recalled to
him Bæda's phrase about an imperium over "all the provinces
south of the Humber," and in a very natural, if pedantic, way
he at once linked on his hero to the list of Bæda's seven kings.
This would account for his omission of names like that of Offa,
so startling to Mr. Kemble; for from Oswiu's day to Ecgberht's
day no one had made this particular conquest of Mercia, just
because Mercia during this period had been the dominant power
in southern Britain.

The Church and the Nation.

WITH the failure of Northumbria the union of the conquerors of Britain in a single nation for the time became impossible. Far as the northern kingdom surpassed the rest in political and military development, half a century of bitter struggle had failed to reveal in it such a preponderance of power as would force the states south of the Humber to bow to its permanent supremacy. That Mercia or Wessex should succeed where Northumbria had failed was as yet out of the question, and when Oswiu's realm withdrew into practical isolation, all hope of national union seemed to vanish away. But at this moment a new element began to play its part in English life. The battle of the Winwæd had proved a delusive triumph for Northumbria. But it was a decisive victory for the Cross. With it all active resistance on the part of the older heathendom came to an end. Christianity, which had gradually won recognition as a state religion in northern, eastern, and southern Britain, became with the submission of Mercia the

faith of the New England at large ; and the worship
of Woden only lingered for a few years to come in
the petty and isolated kingdom of the South Saxons,
which lay severed from the rest of the island by
the Andredsweald. The religious hopes of Gregory
were realized in the subjection of Britain to the
new faith, and the time had come for the carrying out
of those plans which he had devised for its ecclesias-
tical administration. Nothing was more character-
istic of Roman Christianity than its administrative
organization. Its ordered hierarchy of bishops,
priests, and lower clergy, its judicial and deliberative
machinery, its courts and its councils, had become a
part of its very existence, and settled with it on every
land that it won. Gregory, as we have seen, had
plotted out the yet heathen Britain into an ordered
Church with two archbishoprics, each surrounded by
twelve suffragan sees ; and though the carrying
out of this scheme in its actual form had proved
impossible, yet it was certain that the first effort of
the Roman see, now that the ground was clear,
would be to replace it by some analogous arrange-
ment. But no such religious organization could
stamp itself on English soil without telling on the
civil organization about it. The regular subordina-
tion of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate, in the
administration of the Church, would supply a mould
on which the civil organization of the state would
unconsciously but irresistibly shape itself. The gather-
ings of the clergy in national synods would inevitably
lead the way to national gatherings for civil legislation.
Above all, if the nation in its spiritual capacity came

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to recognize the authority of a single primate, it
would insensibly be led in its temporal capacity to
recognize a single sovereign.

But the hopes of such an organization rested in
the submission of the English States to the Church
of Rome, and it was not the Church of Rome which
had won the victory of the Winwæd, or which
seemed likely to reap its fruits. After its efforts
at extension under Æthelberht and Eadwine, the
Roman mission had for a while sunk into a mere
church of Kent; and though the Burgundian Felix,
who had taken the lead in a mission to East-Anglia,[1]
and Birinus, with his successor, the Frankish Bishop
Agilberct, who were preaching in Wessex,[2] were
both attached to the Roman communion, the recent
and imperfect conversion of these countries gave
them as yet little weight in the religious balance of
the country. The real life and energy of the new
Christianity were concentrated in the north, and the
north looked for its religious centre, not to Rome,
but to Ireland. Never was the connexion of Britain
with Ireland closer than in the years that followed
Penda's fall. The spell which it cast over Northumbria
was irresistible.[3] To cross the Irish Channel, whether
for piety or for learning, became a fashion in the
north,[4] while fresh missionaries streamed over in turn

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 15.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[3] We see an amusing proof of this in Bæda's statement that
he had seen persons bitten by serpents cured by drinking water
into which scrapings of the leaves of books that had been
brought out of Ireland had been put. (Bæda, H. E. lib. i. c. 1.)

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. 7. ; iv. 3, 4 ; v. 9, 10.

to wander into the wildest spots where English heathen-
dom found a hold. One solitary made his way as far
as the South Saxons.[1] Another settled among the
East Englishmen, and left his memory to a monastery
in Suffolk.[2] Nor was the Northumbrian Church itself
wanting in missionaries as ardent as these. The
brothers Cedd and Ceadda, one the apostle of
Essex,[3] the other of the Mercians, the St. Chadd
to whom the Mercian see of Lichfield still looks as
its founder, were only instances of the zeal of their
day. So simple and lowly in temper was Ceadda
that he travelled on foot in his mission journeys till
Archbishop Theodore in later days lifted him with
his own hands on horseback. The poetry of their
early Christian enthusiasm breaks out in the death-
legend that tells how voices of singers singing
sweetly descended from heaven to a little cell beside
St. Mary's church where the Mercian bishop lay
dying. Then "the same song ascended from the roof
again, and returned heavenward by the same way
that it came."[4]

But the work of these missionaries has been almost *Cuthbert.*
lost in the glory of Cuthbert.[5] No story better lights

[1] Dicul. Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.
[2] Fursey. Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 19.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 22, 23.
[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 3.
[5] For Cuthbert we have (*a*) an anonymous life by a contem-
porary (in Bæda, Opera Minora, ed. Stevenson, p. 259); (*b*) a
life by Bæda, in some measure drawn from this, but with fresh
information from contemporaries (in the same volume, p. 49);
and Bæda's abstract of the latter in his Ecclesiastical History,
lib. iv. c. 27.

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up for us the religious life of the time than the story of this apostle of the Lowlands, a story that carries us into the northernmost part of Northumbria, into the country of the Teviot and the Tweed. Born on the southern edge of the Lammermoor, a line of dark uplands which runs eastward to the sea at Dunbar, Cuthbert found shelter at eight years old in the house of a widow who dwelt in the village of Wrangholm. In after years he loved to tell stories of his boyhood, of the strength and agility which made him the best runner and wrestler among the village children, of his quickness of wit, his love of laughter and fun.[1] But already his robust frame hid a poetic sensibility which caught even in the chance word of a game a call to higher things. An attack of lameness deepened the religious impression. It was for his sins, the boy thought, that God had chained and bound him; and a rider who came one day over the hill, mounted on a fine horse, and clad in the graceful white riding cloak which was common among the nobles of the time, seemed as he pitied and tended the injured limb an angel sent to bring forgiveness and health.[2] From that time Cuthbert's bent was to a religious life. It was of this that he dreamed as he kept his master's sheep on the bleak uplands whence the Leader flows into the Tweed, uplands still famous as a sheep-walk, though a scant herbage scarce veils the whinstone rock.[3] We see him for a while keeping watches of prayer in the night while his comrades sleep around, or in lonelier hours breaking the stillness

[1] Anon. Vit. p. 261.   [2] Anon. Vit. p. 262.
[3] Anon. Vit. p. 263.

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of the heights with hymns, or seeing in splendour of falling stars and northern lights angel-troops ascending and descending between earth and heaven. The news which was "noised far and wide" of Bishop Aidan's death woke him from this dream-life, and in 651 he made his way to a group of straw-thatched log-huts in the midst of an untilled solitude where a few Irish monks from Lindisfarne had settled in the mission-station of Melrose.[1]

His mission work.

To-day the land is a land of poetry and romance. Cheviot and Lammermoor, Ettrick and Teviotdale, Yarrow and Annan-water, are musical with old ballads and border minstrelsy. Agriculture has chosen its valleys for her favourite seat, and drainage and steam-power have turned sedgy marshes into farm and meadow. But to see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day we must sweep meadow and farm away again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden hovels, and crossed by boggy tracks along which travellers

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[1] Anon. p. 264, 267, Bæda's Life, c. vi. This was not on the site of the present abbey, but at the spot known as "Old Melrose." "On a green sheltered slope, a little below the point where the Tweed receives the scanty waters of the Leader, and then takes a bold semicircular sweep under the wood and rocks of Bemerside" (Raine, "Dictionary of Christian Biography," i. 725). Thence after a few years he went to Ripon with his abbot Eata, to whom King Alchfrid had given ground there for a monastery, but was expelled in 661 by Wilfrid, and returned to Melrose to face the pestilence. In 664, after the Synod of Whitby, he was sent as Prior to Lindisfarne, and after staying there twelve years (664—676) withdrew to the Isle of Farne. It was these later years at Melrose and Lindisfarne that formed the time of his main mission work.

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rode spear in hand and eye kept cautiously about them.[1] Though the new religion had already its adherents even in remote villages, the Northumbrian peasantry were for the most part Christians only in name. With the general religious indifference of their race they had yielded to their thegns in nominally accepting the new belief, as these had yielded to the king. But they retained their old superstitions side by side with the new worship; plague or mishap drove them back to a reliance on their heathen charms and amulets; and if trouble befel the Christian preachers who came settling among them they took it as proof of the wrath of the older gods. When some log-rafts which were floating down the Tyne for the construction of an abbey at its mouth drifted with the monks who were at work on them out to sea, the rustic bystanders shouted "Let nobody pray for them; let nobody pity these men, who have taken away from us our old worship; and how their new-fangled customs are to be kept nobody knows."[2] While Oswiu was nerving himself for the struggle with Penda, Cuthbert wandered among listeners such as these, choosing above all the remoter mountain villages from whose roughness and poverty other teachers turned aside. Unlike his Irish comrades, the missionaries who had followed Aidan, he needed no interpreter as he passed from village to village; the frugal, long-headed Northumbrians listened willingly to one who was himself a peasant of the Lowlands and who had caught the rough North-

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[1] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. vi.

[2] Bæda, "Life of Cuthbert," c. iii.

umbrian burr along the banks of the Tweed.   His
patience, his humorous good sense, the sweetness of
his look, told for him, and not less the vigorous frame
which fitted the peasant-preacher for the hard life he
had chosen.   " Never did man die of hunger who
served God faithfully," he would say when nightfall
found them supperless in the waste.   " Look at the
eagle overhead !   God can feed us through him if He
will "—and once at least he owed his meal to a fish
that the scared bird let fall.[1]   At another time a
snowstorm drove his boat on the coast of Fife.   " The
snow closes the road along the shore," mourned his
comrades ; " the storm bars our way over · sea."
" There is still the way of heaven that lies open,"
said Cuthbert.

But poetic as was its temper, and unwearied as   *Severance*
was the energy which it showed in the work of con-   *of the*
version, the success of the Irish Church threatened   *Churches.*
Britain with both political and religious ills.   The
Celtic Church, as we have seen in its own Irish home,
was utterly devoid of that power of organization which
was the strength of the Church of Rome.   Hundreds
of wandering bishops, a vast religious authority
wielded by hereditary chieftains, an inextricable
confusion of tribal quarrels and ecclesiastical con-
troversies in which the clergy, robbed of all really
spiritual influence, contributed no element save that
of disorder to the state, a wild jungle-growth of
asceticism which dissociated piety from morality, and
the absence of those larger and more humanizing
influences which a wider world alone can give, this is

[1] Bæda. "Life of Cuthbert," c. 12.

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the picture which the Irish Church of later times presents to us. Nor would the Irish Church in northern Britain have found very different fortunes. It had brought with it the purely monastic system of its home ; and great as were its missionary labours, it showed no trace of any power of moulding the new Christianity into an ordered form. But even had it shown such a power, its permanent establishment would have been none the less disastrous. The religious unity of the English race would in fact have been broken even more fatally than its political unity was broken. To the church of the Roman obedience, to the church, that is, of Kent, East Anglia, and Wessex, the Irish Church seemed as schismatic as the church of Wales. Both alike held aloof from any definite submission to the Church of Rome ; both clung to a tonsure of their own ; both kept Easter at a season different from that of the rest of the Christian world. The difference sprang simply from the long severance of the Celtic churches from the general body of Christendom ; but when the conversion of Britain removed the barrier which isolated them, and again brought them face to face with the West, its real origin was lost in the fanatical hatred with which the Roman ecclesiastics denounced these usages, and the no less fanatical obstinacy with which the Irish ecclesiastics clung to them. To the one side the Irish tonsure was the tonsure of Simon Magus, the Irish Easter a Jewish Passover. To the other the tonsure was the tonsure of Columba, their Easter a tradition of St. John. So long as both rivals were threatened with the triumph of heathendom

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under Penda, any strife between them seems to have been carefully avoided. But with the disappearance of this common danger a collision became inevitable; and the continuance of both as equal powers on English soil must have torn Englishmen asunder more fatally than any political parting.

Approach of the strife.

Even in the years that preceded his final struggle with Penda, Oswiu had been forced to watch anxiously the first signs of a gathering storm which was to end in open conflict between the churches. The storm was roused by the very step which he took to secure his rule in Deira, for if his marriage furthered the political union of the two northern realms, religiously it added a new element of discord to them. Eanfled brought with her the Roman traditions and the Roman allegiance of the church of Kent.[1] An exile in the south from her childhood, she had known nothing of Aidan or his fellow-workers in the north; while to the men among whom she lived the Church from which Aidan came seemed simply schismatic. Through the heathen reaction after Eadwine's fall, and through the reign of Oswald, a deacon named James,[2] the sole relic of the church of Paulinus, had preserved the Roman usage in Deira: and he had instructed many in it " as the days brightened around him." James however might have lived on unheeded had not the coming of Eanfled given a new and powerful impulse to the movement. A Roman party at once formed about her. She brought with her a priest of the Roman Church in Kent, and observed

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

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*Benedict
Biscop.*

the Roman Easter. While Oswiu with his people kept the Easter feast at the date fixed by his Irish missionaries, Eanfled—it was whispered—was still fasting for Lent.[1]

So long however as Aidan lived the reverence in which he was held hushed the faint whisper of coming strife. But with his death began the stirrings of two men who were destined to bring it quickly to a head. Born in the very year of Oswald's victory at the Hevenfeld, Wilfrid[2] had been sent in boyhood to study at Lindisfarne.[3] But in the very centre of Irish influence he felt the spell of Rome ; and young as he was, he resolved to visit the Imperial City.[4] The thought sprang doubtless from the suggestion of Eanfled, to whom he was known, and who sent him in 652, the year after Oswiu's conquest of Deira, with letters of protection to her cousin King Earconberht of Kent.[5] The same craving was stirring in the heart of Benedict Biscop, a thegn of Oswiu's court ; and the two young men, for Benedict was but five and twenty and Wilfred seventeen, met in Kent, and crossed the sea together on their Roman pilgrimage. Wilfrid however remained at Lyons on his way, and Benedict alone reached Rome ; but the sight of the city kindled in

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

[2] For Wilfrid we have a biography by Eddi, in "Historians of the Church of York," ed. Raine, vol. i., and a more temperate statement in Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19. Benedict Biscop's life is the first in Bæda's "Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Yarrow " (printed at end of Hussey's edition of Eccl. Hist.).

[3] Eddi, c. 2.   [4] Eddi, c. 3.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.

him a fervour which showed itself on his return a
year later in ceaseless preaching against the Irish
usages.   Oswiu's son, Alchfrid, who had been raised
to a share in his father's royalty, was stirred at
last to vow the same pilgrimage,[1] and though he
was unable to carry out his vow, his accession to the
Roman party at once raised the quarrel of the churches
into a grave political question.   But harassing as was
this growing strife, the attention of Oswiu was ab-
sorbed in a struggle for life till the fall of Penda ;
and after the victory of the Winwæd all thought of
the little group of ecclesiastical rebels who clustered
round Eanfled and Alchfrid was lost in the spiritual
triumph of the church of Lindisfarne.   Finan had fol-
lowed Aidan as bishop at Holy Island :[2] and the years
of his bishopric were years of a wonderful activity.
If Wessex was won by a Roman missionary, the
winning of Central Britain, the reconquest of Essex,
the first evangelization even of the wild South-
Saxons, were the work of missionaries from the Celtic
church of the north.

But Alchfrid and Eanfled remained steadily at the *Wilfrid.*
head of their Roman party ; and the efforts of
Benedict Biscop were soon reinforced by the arrival
of a worker yet more dogged and energetic.   This
was Wilfrid whom he had left behind in Gaul, and
who now returned after two visits to Rome to combat
what he denounced as the schism of Northumbria.[3]
Young as he was, and he was still only a few

[1] Bæda, Vit. Abbatum, p. 317.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 17.   .
[3] Eddi, c. 7.

Y

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years over twenty, Wilfrid's energy proved him a valuable ally, and Alchfrith set him as abbot in 661 over a house which he had founded some years before at Ripon. The house had been an offshoot from Melrose, and Cuthbert was among the brethren who had come from Tweed-side to dwell there ; but to the young abbot these brethren were schismatics, and he drove them out.[1] Their expulsion brought the quarrel to a head ; for the strife was hotly taken up by Finan's successor, Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne ; while Alchfrid summoned to Wilfrid's aid Bishop Agilberct, a Frank missionary who had been called after the death of Birinus to the see of the West-Saxons. There is no ground, however, for believing that the efforts of the Roman party would have been more successful than of old had Oswiu continued to support the church of Lindisfarne. Hitherto his support had been vigorous and unwavering. Whatever might be the hostility of his wife and son, the king remained true to the church which had given shelter to the sons of Æthelfrith in the days of their exile. He had learned to speak Irish during his stay at Hii,[2] and his sympathy went with the Irish clergy around him ; he loved Bishop Colman as his brother Oswald had loved Bishop Aidan.[3] The house indeed which he had just founded at Streonashalh as a thankoffering for his victory at the Winwæd was framed on the model of the house at Holy Island.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.
[2] "Oswiu . . . .illorum etiam linguâ optime imbutus."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.   [3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 26.

But a marked change of temper was seen when he summoned a synod at Whitby in 664 for the settlement of the disputed questions.[1] The forces as they faced one another still seemed strangely unequal. The Roman party consisted, as of old, of none but Alchfrid, Bishop Agilberct with his chaplain Agatho, the priest James, and Abbot Wilfrid, for Benedict was on his way to Rome. On the other side were the representatives of almost the whole church of Northumbria, Bishop Colman, the East-Saxon Bishop Cedd who acted as interpreter, the brethren of Lindisfarne, Abbess Hild and the brethren and sisters of the very house in which the synod was gathered. Above all, the Irish party looked for aid to Oswiu himself, who presided over the mixed assembly of clergy and thegns. His first words however showed the drift of the king's policy. The disputed questions he submitted to the judgment of the council. But he pressed earnestly for uniformity; and his resolve to obtain it was seen in his significant interference at the close of the debate. Colman pleaded hotly for the Irish fashion of the tonsure and for the Irish time of keeping Easter. Wilfrid's plea for the Roman, learned and elaborate as was its form, condensed itself in the single argument which he saw had weight with the king. "You fight," he said, "against the whole world."[2] Still the debate went on. The one disputant appealed to the authority of Columba, the other to that of St. Peter. "You

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

[2] "Contra totum orbem . . . . pugnant."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.

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own," cried the king at last to Colman, " that Christ gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of Heaven— has he given such power to Columba ? " The bishop could but answer " No." " Then will I rather obey the porter of Heaven," said Oswiu, " lest when I reach its gates he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me, and there be none to open." The humorous form of Oswiu's decision could not hide its importance ; and the synod had no sooner broken up than Colman, followed by the whole of the Irish-born brethren and thirty of their English fellows, forsook the see of Aidan and sailed away to Hii.

*Its
issues.*

It is possible that lesser political motives may have partly swayed Oswiu in his decision ; for the revival of Mercia had left him but the alliance of Kent in the south, and this victory of the Kentish Church would draw tighter the bonds which linked together the two powers. But we may fairly credit him with a larger statesmanship. Trivial in fact as were the actual points of difference which parted the Roman Church from the Irish, the question to which com-munion Northumbria should belong was, as we have seen, of immense moment to the after fortunes of England. It was not merely that, as Wilfrid said, to fight against Rome was to fight against the world. Had England indeed clung to the Irish Church, it must have remained spiritually isolated from the bulk of Western Christendom. Fallen as Rome might be from its older greatness, it preserved the traditions of civilization, of letters and art and law. Its faith still served as a bond which held together the nations that sprang from the wreck of the Empire. To repulse

Rome was to condemn England to isolation. But grave as such considerations were, they were of little weight beside the influence which Oswiu's decision had on the very unity of the English race. The issue of the synod not only gave England a share in the religious unity of Western Christendom, it gave her a religious unity at home. However dimly such thoughts may have presented themselves to Oswiu's mind, it was the instinct of a statesman that led him to set aside the love and gratitude of his youth, and to secure the religious oneness of England in the Synod of Whitby.

From the Channel to the Firth of Forth the English Church was now a single religious body within the obedience of Rome, and the time had come for carrying out those plans of organization which Rome had conceived from the first moment of Augustine's landing. The actual scheme of ecclesiastical government indeed which Gregory had then devised had broken down before the stress of facts. Of his two contemplated archbishoprics, York made as yet no claim to a primacy, while London gave way to the claims of Canterbury as the see of Augustine, as the mother-church of Britain, above all as the bishopric of the one realm which had from the first remained Christian, the kingdom of Kent. Canterbury had become the natural centre of ecclesiastical life, now that the life called for such a centre for its development. The choice of its Primate thus became all important, and when the death of Archbishop Deusdedit in the plague of 664 left the see of Canterbury vacant, Oswiu as still exercising some

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nominal supremacy over Britain, and Ecgberht of Kent, as king of the actual diocese, joined in selecting a priest named Wighard for the post and in sending him for consecration to Rome. The selection of Wighard following on that of Deusdedit, was in itself a notable step towards the nationalization of the church, for Wighard, like his predecessor in the primacy, was an Englishman. Though seventy years had passed since Augustine's arrival, neither he nor the Roman missionaries who followed him, Laurentius, Mellitus, Justus, or Honorius, had acquired the English tongue ; and throughout their primacy the Kentish kings had been forced, like Æthelberht, to gather what they could of their teaching through the means of interpreters. It marked the rise of a keener sense of nationality when Ecgberht, with Oswiu's assent, resolved to have "a bishop of his own race and his own tongue." [1]

Theodore.   Wighard however died of plague on his arrival at Rome, and Pope Vitalian, interpreting the request of the kings for the consecration of the primate they had selected as a request to find them a primate [2] in any case, selected in Wighard's place a Neapolitan abbot of African race named Hadrian. Hadrian,

[1] " Cupiens eum sibi Romæ ordinari episcopum, quatenus suæ gentis et linguæ habens antistitem, tanto perfectius, cum subjectis sibi populis, vel verbis imbueretur fidei vel mysteriis, quanto hæc non per interpretem, sed per cognati et contribulis viri linguam simul manumque susciperet."—Bæda, Vit. Abbatum. Hussey's Bæda, p. 317 : The "contribulis" is emphatic too, for Deusdedit had been a West-Saxon.

[2] See Vitalian's letter. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 111, 112, with the editor's note.

however, refused the offer of so distant a see,[1] and it
was with some difficulty that the Pope at last found
an archbishop in Theodore, an eastern monk born at
Tarsus in Cilicia, a man famous for his learning and
piety, but who had already reached the age of sixty-
six. Aged however as he was, Theodore was kept
four months in Rome till his eastern tonsure could
be superseded by a tonsure in the correct Roman
fashion, and the characteristic caution of the Roman
court was seen in its despatch of Hadrian as his
companion lest any shade of Greek heterodoxy should
be introduced by the new primate into Britain.[2]
The result of these delays, and of a long detention in
Gaul during his journey, was that Theodore did not
land in Kent till the May of 669.

The Britain which he found on his arrival had
become in the interval a very different country
from the Britain which we last surveyed after the
battle of the Winwæd. Northumbria, which then
seemed supreme over the whole English race, had
now retired within her own bounds across the
Humber, and retained none of her conquests to
the south of that river save the territory of the
Lindiswaras. Mercia on the other hand, which then
seemed utterly destroyed, had risen into a great-
ness it had never known before. If it left for a time
Lindsey to Northumbria, it reft from that kingdom

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Mercia
under
Wulfhere.

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[1] "Antistitem," says Vitalian to Oswiu, "minime valuimus
nunc reperire pro longinquitate itineris."

[2] " Ut ei doctrinæ cooperator existens, diligenter adtenderet
ne quid ille contrarium veritati fidei, Græcorum more, in ecclesiam
cui præesset, introduceret."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 1.

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the district south of the Mersey, and with it at least the site and port of Chester.[1]   In Mid-Britain East-Anglia may still have held aloof from Wulfhere, but in all other quarters the realm of Penda seems to have been quickly restored.   Even the territory of the Hwiccas, which had been the spoil of the victory at Cirencester, again found itself in the Mercian grasp ; for Wulfhere's rule was not only owned in the Severn valley, but embraced the lower valley of the Wye· In this region, our Herefordshire, Wulfhere set his brother Merewald as an under-king.[2]   But he did more than restore his father's realm.   The renewed activity of the West-Saxons, which had shown itself in their recent victories over the Britons on their south-western frontier, may have led to some fresh attempts to recover the lost territory of the Hwiccas, but whatever was the cause of the conflict between Cenwealh's host and that of Wulfhere in 661, it ended in so decisive a victory for the Mercians that their ravages extended into the heart of Wessex as far as Ashdown.[3]   It was probably this triumph which enabled Wulfhere to carry his arms into the valley of the Thames.   To the eastward the East-Saxons and London came to own his supremacy ;[4]

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[1] We have no record of this conquest or of its date; but from this time we find Cheshire and the country as far as the Mersey in Mercian hands.

[2] " Germanus vero ipsius, Westan-Hecanorum rex, sanctus Merewaldus."—Flor. Worc. Geneal. i. 265.   The Hwiccas were in the same way ruled by Subreguli; in the next Mercian reign Oshere is " Hwicciorum subregulus."—Flor. Worc. Geneal. i. 239.   [3] Engl. Chron. a. 661.

[4] Wini bought the Bishopric of London from Wulfhere. (Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.) For Essex, Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 30.

BRITAIN IN 665.

Scale of Miles.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

SUPREMACY OF OSWIU

NORTHUMBRIA

SUPREMACY OF OSWIU

North Welsh

West Engle or Mercians

SUPREMACY OF WULFHERE

Snotinga

Middle Engle

Lindiswara

North Folk

East Engle

South Folk

WYRE

ARDEN

South Engle

Hecana

Hwiccan

CWM

East Saxons

Middle Sexe

Surrey

Kent

WEST SAXONS

ANDREDSWEALD

South Saxons

West Wales

SELWOOD

Stanford's Geograph! Establ!
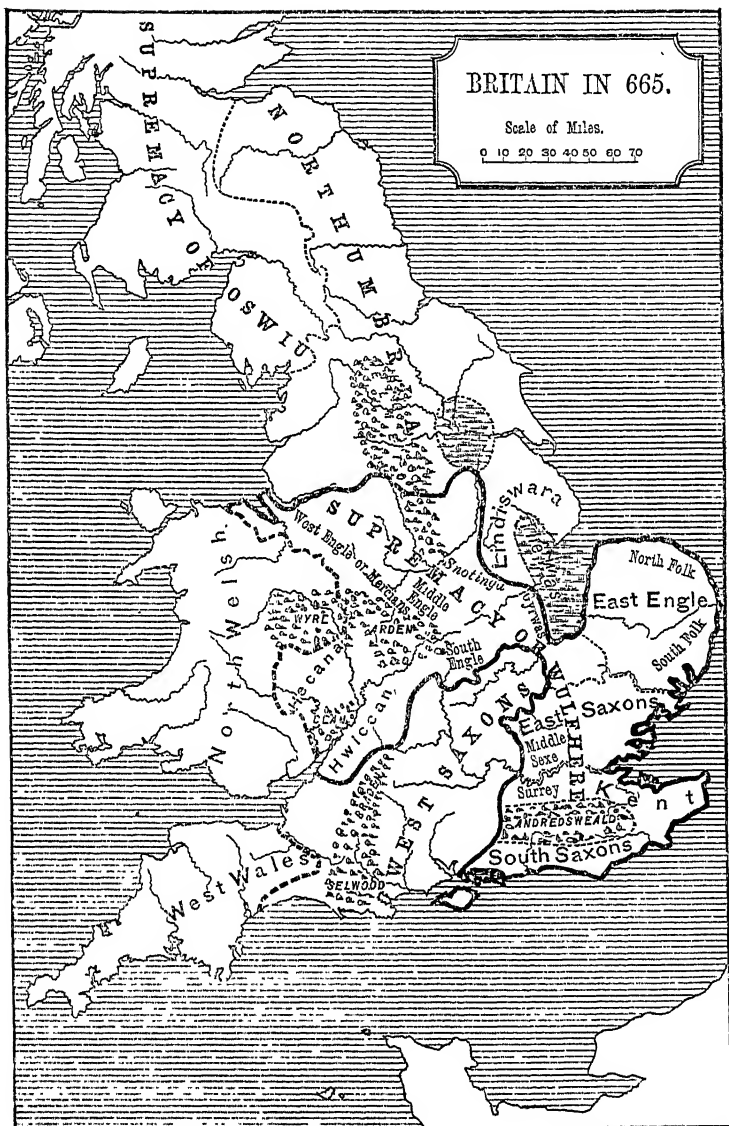
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while southwards he pushed across the river and over
Surrey, which we find governed by an under-king of
his appointment,[1] into Sussex.   The wild Saxon tribe
which was sheltered by the Weald may have sought
his overlordship as a protection from the more press-
ing attacks of the West-Saxons; in 661, at any rate,
their king Æthelwalch was baptized in Wulfhere's
presence and by his persuasion;[2] and his submission
was rewarded by a gift of two outlying settlements of
the Jutes, the Isle of Wight and the lands of the
Meon-wara along the Southampton Water, which we
must suppose had been previously torn from Wessex
by the arms of the Mercian king.

*Theodore
in
Britain.*

The Mercian supremacy, which thus reached from
the Humber to the Channel, and stretched as far
westward as the Wye, while on the eastern coast
East-Anglia and Kent, though still independent, lay
helpless and isolated in its grasp, was thus the main
political fact in Britain when Theodore landed on its
shores.   He came with a clear and distinct aim—
the organization of the English dioceses, the group-
ing of these subordinate centres round the see of
Canterbury, and the bringing the church which
was thus organized into a fixed relation to Western
Christendom through its obedience to the see of
Rome.   With this purpose he spent the three years
which followed his arrival, from 669 to 672, in

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[1] Malmesbury, Gest. Pontif. ed. Migne. col. 1515.   For the
Chertsey charters, see article on Erkenwald, by Stubbs, in
"Dictionary of Christian Biography," vol. ii.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.

journeying through the whole island.[1] Wherever he went he secured obedience to Rome by enforcing the Roman observance of Easter and the other Roman rites, while his very presence brought about for himself a recognition of his primacy over the nation at large. As yet no archbishop had crossed the bounds of Kent, and to the rest of Britain the primate at Canterbury must have seemed a mere provincial prelate like the rest. But the presence of Theodore in Northumbria, in Mercia, in Wessex alike, the welcome he everywhere received, the reverence with which he was everywhere listened to, at once raised his position into a national one.[2] "He," says Bæda, "was the first of the archbishops whom the whole English Church consented to obey;"[3] and everywhere he went he asserted this new position of the primacy by an ordering, though, as we shall see, only a preliminary ordering, of the English dioceses.

Some ordering was absolutely needful. So great a confusion had been produced by the contest between the churches, that to hot partisans on either side some of the English bishops seemed no bishops at all; and Wilfrid, when named to the see of York, had cast an open slur on the validity of his fellow-prelates' orders by crossing over the Channel to seek consecration from the bishops of Gaul.[4] Nor was this

ordering of dioceses.

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2 : "Peragratâ insulâ totâ, quaquaversum Anglorum gentes morabantur."

[2] "Nam et libentissime ab omnibus suscipiebatur atque audiebatur."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

[3] "Isque primus erat in Archiepiscopis, cui omnis Anglorum Ecclesia manus dare consentiret."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 28.

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the worst. Two of the English dioceses, those of
Wessex and Northumbria, had not for some years
seen the presence of any bishop. In Wessex king
Cenwealh had quarrelled with bishop Agilberct, driven
him as a foreigner from the realm, and set Wini
as bishop in his stead. Then in 666 he had in turn
driven Wini from his see and left Wessex without
any bishop at all.[1] On the other hand, Wilfrid, who
had gone to Gaul for his consecration, had delayed
his return so long, that Oswiu set Ceadda as bishop
in his place ; and after three years' retirement at
Ripon he had withdrawn to the south, and was actu-
ally administering the vacant diocese of Kent when
Theodore arrived there.[2] Wilfrid, however, was now
placed in his northern diocese, and Leutherius, a
nephew of Agilberct, was drawn from Gaul to fill the
bishopric of the West-Saxons,[3] while Theodore solved
the vexed question of their disputed orders by re-
consecrating Bisi as bishop over East-Anglia, and
Ceadda as bishop of Mercia.[4] Wini remained at
London in his diocese of the East-Saxons, which
he had bought from Wulfhere in 666,[5] and the
placing of his own under-bishop, Putta, at Rochester
completed Theodore's first ordering of the English
episcopate.

In the autumn of 673 this earlier work was

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[2] Eddi, "Life of Wilfrid," c. 14 ; Bæda, H. E. iv. 2.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[4] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2, 3. "Denuo catholica ratione
consummavit."—Flor. Worc. a. 673.

[5] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

completed by the calling together of these bishops
with their leading clergy in a council at Hertford.[1]
The decrees of this council formed a further step
in Theodore's work of settlement, for by them each
bishop with his clergy was restricted within the
limits of his own diocese, and the free wandering of
the earlier English mission-bishops over the face of
the country was brought to an end.[2] A yet more
important canon enacted that this synod at Hertford
should be but the first of a series of such synods, and
that the bishops should meet each year at the close of
July in a spot which bore the name of Cloveshoe.[3]
It is as the first of these assemblies that the council
of Hertford is so important in our history. The
synods to which its canons gave birth not only
exerted an important influence on the church itself,
but they exerted a yet more powerful influence
upon the nation at large. At every important
juncture the new bishops gathered round their
primate from every quarter in England, to take
counsel and frame canons for the rule of the church
at large. They met, not as Northumbrian or Mercian
or Saxon bishops, but as bishops of a national church.
These meetings were in fact the first of our national
gatherings for general legislation ; for it was at a
much later time that the Wise Men of Wessex, or
Northumbria, or Mercia, learned to come together in

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Council of
Hertford.

[1] Wini, however, was not present at this council.

[2] For council of Hertford, see Haddan and Stubbs, " Councils,"
vol. iii. pp. 118—122.

[3] For the various localities to which this name has been
assigned, see Haddan and Stubbs, " Councils," vol. iii. p. 122, note.

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the Witenagemote of all England.　The synods which
Theodore convened as religiously representative of
the whole English nation led the way by their
example to our national parliament, while the canons
which these councils enacted, though carefully avoid-
ing all direct intermeddling with secular ,matters,
pointed the way to a national system of law.　How
strong an influence this work would exert on English
feeling, the next hundred years were to show.　It was
in vain that during that period state after state strove
to build up .the fabric of a national unity by the
power of the sword.　But in spite of their failure
the drift towards unity grew more and more
irresistible.　If England could not find its national
life in the supremacy of Northumbria or Mercia, it
found it in the church ; and amidst the wreck of
kingdoms the power of the church grew steadily
greater, because the church alone expressed the
national consciousness of the English people.[1]

*The
school at
Canterbury.*
In the journeys of these three years throughout
Britain Theodore had found a companion and fellow-
worker in his friend Hadrian.　But he found in him
a fellow-worker in more than this task of organization.
Both of the friends were famous for their knowledge
as well as their piety,[2] and one of their earliest efforts
seems to have been to gather a school at Canterbury.
As yet the knowledge which came in the train of the

[1] For the work of Theodore, and the character of the new
English Church, see Stubbs, Const. Hist. vol. i. chap. viii.

[2] The Pope in a synodical letter calls Theodore, "archiepiscopum
et philosophum."—Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. p. 140.
"Literis sacris simul et sæcularibus abundanter ambo erant
instructi."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

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new faith had filtered into Britain through the
wandering Irishmen, half-scholars, half-missionaries,
who settled in lonely spots, and then eked out their
living by the learners they drew about them.[1]   Such
teaching, however, was necessarily wanting in per-
manence ; and a new and settled form was given to
English education by the establishment of such a
school as that of Canterbury.   Though its main
teaching was in subjects that related to the know-
ledge either of the Bible or of the services of the
church, yet this scheme of education proved broad
enough to embrace the astronomy, the arithmetic,
and the poetic art of the time, as well as a
knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues.   In its
Greek teaching, indeed, the school was fortunate, for
the knowledge of Greek was fast fading away from
the western world, and where it still lingered, in-
struction in it had died down into the mastering of a
list of words without knowledge of its grammar or
its literature.   But Greek was the native tongue of
Theodore, and though Hadrian was by birth an
African, he had lived long enough in Southern Italy,
where Greek was still a living tongue, to be as skilled
a master of it as of Latin.[2]   How thorough their
teaching in both languages was, is shown by the fact
that sixty years afterwards Bæda found men who had
been trained in the school of Canterbury, who knew

[1] Thus Maidulf, " deficientibus necessariis scholares in discipu-
latum accepit, ut eorum liberalitate tenuitatem victus corrigeret."
—Malm. Vit. Aldhelmi (" Anglia Sacra," vol. ii. p. 3).
[2] " Græcæ pariter et Latinæ linguæ peritissimus."—Bæda,
II. E. lib. iv. c. 1.

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Ealdhelm.

Latin and Greek as perfectly as their own English tongue.[1]

But the influence of this school on the development of English intellect is shown more vividly by the fact that from it our written literature, the literature that is of the English in Britain, took its birth. With one scholar, Æddi, who followed Wilfrid to York, began the prose literature of Northern Britain ; with another, Ealdhelm, began at an even earlier date the whole literature of the South. Ealdhelm[2] was a kinsman of the royal house of Wessex, and probably a son of one of the West-Saxon kings. If, as seems likely, he was born in the middle of the seventh century, he must have already reached manhood when the school was set up at Canterbury; and his earlier training was due to Maidulf, an Irish wanderer who had sought a spot for his hermitage in the woodlands of northern Wessex, and who was gathering scholars there from among its thegns. But it was from Hadrian and Theodore that Ealdhelm drew the intellectual impulse which he communicated to the scholars who gathered round him when he returned to his home at Malmesbury. He had become a master of all the knowledge of his day, and the rising scholar-world of Kent and Northumbria welcomed his Latin poems and prose, where a real quickness of wit and perception of

[1] "Indicio est quod usque hodie supersunt de eorum discipulis, qui Latinam Græcamque linguam æque ut propriam in qua nati sunt norunt."—Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 2.

[2] Ealdhelm's Life by Fabricius is printed by Giles, "Opera Aldhelmi," p. 354 ; that by W. of Malmesbury forms the fifth book of his "Gesta Pontificum," in Wharton, "Anglia Sacra," vol. ii.

natural beauty struggled with a fatal luxuriance of
metaphor and rhetoric.[1] But to Wessex itself Eald-
helm was more than a mere scholar.   He was the
first singer of his race.   Ælfred loved to tell how
Ealdhelm won men to heed sacred things by taking
stand as a gleeman and singing English songs on a
bridge.[2] The songs of Ealdhelm led the way in that
upgrowth of popular poetry which was soon to fill the
land with English verse.   Creed, prayer, riddle, alle-
gory, acrostic, bible-story and saint-story, hero-tale
and battle-tale, proverb and moral saw, the longing of
the exile, the toil of the seaman, the warning of the
grave, passed alike into rime.   It was with an ever-
growing stock of ballads that the gleeman trolled his
way from fair to fair.   A book of English songs was
the prize of Ælfred's childhood ; English songs were
the first study of his children ; " vain songs and
legends of heathendom " were played by Dunstan in
youth upon his harp.   A mass of poetic romance grew
up round the later English kings ; and the story of
Æthelstan and Eadgar has been all but lost in the
ballad-growth which the chroniclers of the twelfth
century melted down into prose.

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[1] Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm " (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 7)
says :—" Græci involute, Romani splendide, Angli pompatice
dictare solent," and credits Ealdhelm with combining the merits
of the three.   " Involute " and " pompatice " fairly describe a
writer who is utterly carried away by the new charms of style.

[2] Malmesbury, " Life of Aldhelm " (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 4),
" Nativæ, quoque linguæ non negligebat carmina." He quotes the
gleeman story from Ælfred's Handbook, " manualem librum regis
Ælfredi." " Commemorat Ælfredus carmen triviale, quod adhuc
vulgo cantitatur, Aldhelmum fecisse ; " so that Aldhelm's songs
were still popular in the twelfth century.

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Conquest
of the
Avon
basin.

The district in which Ealdhelm taught and sung was one which had but lately passed into the hands of the West-Saxons. We have seen that in their early conquests of the Marlborough Downs they had been barred from further progress by a forest that then filled the upper basin of the Avon. This woodland was in itself a northern continuation of the great

SOUTH WESTERN BRITAIN

Roman names	GLEAVUM
English "	DEORHAM
Modern "	Amesbury

English Miles.
0 5 10   20   30   40

Stanford's Geographical Estab.
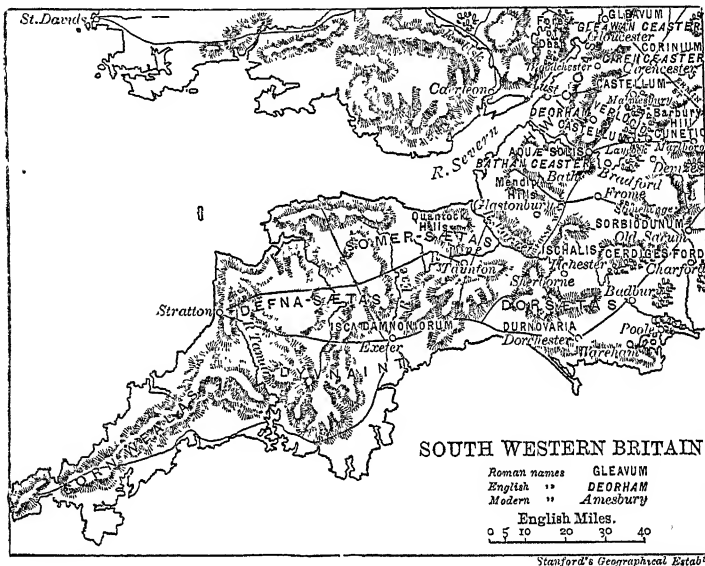
Selwood; it extended even in the time of Charles I. as far as Cricklade; at the time of our story it still covered the site of Malmesbury;[1] and the town of Devizes, on the brow of the hill looking down over the Avon basin, probably preserves in Latin form the

[1] "Nemoris amœnitate quod tunc temporis immensum eo loco succreverat captus, eremeticam exercuit" (Maidulfus). Malmesbury, "Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 3).

rendering of some English name like "Mere" or the
"Borderspot," from which this forest ran unbroken
westward as far as the outskirts of Bath.[1] Though
the victory of Deorham at last carried West-Saxon
territory round the northern and western borders ·
of this British tract, and left it running up· like
a wedge into English soil, it was still saved for a
while from annexation by the fall of Ceawlin, the
outbreak of anarchy among his people, and the
fatal blows which fell upon the West-Saxons at the
hands of Eadwine and Penda. But the loss of the
territory of the Hwiccas, the loss of the Severn
valley and the Cotswolds, forced them to fresh
action in this quarter. Barred from any further
advance to the north, they saw even their progress
westward threatened by the presence of Mercia on
the lower Avon ; and it was as much to preserve
their one remaining field of conquest as to compen-
sate for the retreat of their frontier in other quarters
that Cenwealh marched on this northernmost fastness
of Dyvnaint.

In 652 a battle at Bradford on the Avon made the *Ealdhelm's*
forest tract his own ;[2] while a fresh fight with the *work.*
Welsh, six years later, in 658, at a place called the
Pens, cleared them from the ground along the upper
Parrett.[3] It must have been soon after this conquest
that Maidulf, an Irish scholar monk,[4] set up his

[1] Guest, "Boundaries of the Welsh and English Races after the
conquest of Bath," Arch. Journ. vol. xvi. 112-116.
[2] Engl. Chron. a. 652.   [3] Engl. Chron. a. 658.
[4] "Eruditione philosophus, professione monachus."—Malm.
"Life of Aldhelm" (Angl. Sacr. vol. ii. p. 3).

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hermitage in the forest-tract which had been torn
from the Britons, and drew around him the first
scholars of Wessex. Ealdhelm, as we have seen,
was the most famous outcome of this school, but he
no sooner succeeded Maidulf as abbot of the little
township which was growing up round that teacher's
school and church, and which still preserves his
memory in its name of " Maidulf's burh " or Malmes-
bury, than he became a centre, not only of intellec-
tual, but of religious and industrial activity in his
neighbourhood. In the heart of the great woodland
which stretched from Malmesbury to the Channel,
he planted four new germs of social life in the
monasteries which he established at Bradford on
the Avon ; at Frome on the little river which bears
that name ; at Sherborne on the borders of the forest
country through which the Dorsætas must have been
still at this time pushing their way ; and at Wareham
on the coast beside Poole—a point which shows that
these invaders had already advanced at least thus
far towards the west. The churches he raised at
these spots are noteworthy as the first instances of
building which we meet with in Wessex, but they
had nothing of the rudeness of early work ; architec-
turally, indeed, they were superior to the famous
churches which Benedict Biscop was raising at this
time by the banks of the Wear.[1] So masterly was
their construction that Ealdhelm's churches at
Malmesbury and Sherborne were the only churches
of this early time that were spared by the Norman

[1] Freeman, " King Ine," Somersetshire Archæological Proceed-
ings, 1874, vol. xx. p. 31.

architects after the conquest ; while the church which
he erected on the scene of Cenwealh's victory at
Bradford on Avon, stands in almost perfect preserva-
tion to-day.

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The
English
dioceses.

While Ealdhelm was thus riming and building in
Wessex, Theodore himself was steadily carrying out
the second part of his plans for the organization of
the Church. In the council of Hertford the question
of the increase of the episcopate had been debated,
but left without formal decision.[1] From what we
find afterwards it is probable that this absence of any
resolve on the part of the council was owing to the
reluctance of most of the bishops concerned to consent
to the division of their dioceses. But Theodore's pur-
pose remained unshaken, and the council had no sooner
closed than he began to carry out his plans. The
shape which his present work took, like the shape of
his earlier work, was determined by the previous history
of the English people. The conquest of the Continent
had been wrought either by races such as the Goths,
who were already Christian, or by heathens such as
the Franks, who bowed to the Christian faith of the
nations they conquered. To this oneness of religion
between the German invaders of the Empire and their
Roman subjects was owing the preservation of all
that survived of the Roman world. The Church every-
where remained untouched. The Christian bishop
became the defender of the conquered Italian or Gaul

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[1] The ninth canon runs—"In commune tractatum est, ut
plures Episcopi crescente numero fidelium augerentur, sed de hac
re ad præsens siluimus."—Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," vol.
i. p. 120.

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against the Gothic and Lombard conqueror, the medi-
ator between the German and his subjects, the one
bulwark against barbaric violence and oppression. To
the barbarian on the other hand he was the represent-
ative of all that was venerable in the past, the living
record of law, of letters, and of art. But in Britain
priesthood and people were exterminated together.
When Theodore came to organize the Church of Eng-
land, the very memory of the older Christian Church
which existed in Roman Britain had passed away.
The first missionaries to the Englishmen, strangers
in a heathen land, attached themselves necessarily
to the courts of the kings, who were their earliest
converts, and whose conversion was generally followed
by that of their people. The English bishops were
thus at first royal chaplains, and their diocese was
naturally nothing but the kingdom. The kingdom
of Kent became the diocese of Canterbury, and the
kingdom of Northumbria became the diocese of York.
So absolutely was this the case that the diocese grew
or shrank with the growth or shrinking of the realm
which it spiritually represented, and a bishop of
Wessex or of Mercia found the limits of his see
widened or cut short by the triumphs of Wulfhere or
of Ine. In this way too realms which are all but
forgotten are commemorated in the limits of exist-
ing sees. That of Rochester represented till of late
an obscure kingdom of West Kent, and the frontier
of the original kingdom of Mercia might be recovered
by following the map of the ancient bishopric of
Lichfield.

To make episcopal rule and supervision a real and

living thing over such wide spaces, it was needful that
these realm-dioceses should be broken up into smaller
sees ; but it was characteristic of the care with which
Theodore sought an historical foundation for his work
that even in their division he only fell back on the
tribal demarcations which lay within the limits of
each kingdom. Thus when in 673 he broke up the
see of East-Anglia it was by dividing it into dioceses
of the North-folk and the South-folk, whose prelates
were established at Dunwich and Elmham.[1] He dealt
in the same way with the huger Mercian diocese by
setting a bishop over the Middle English with a see
at Leicester; by establishing at Worcester a bishopric
for the Hwiccas of the lower Severn valley ; and
another for the far-off Hecanas at Hereford ; while
the peoples whom Wulfhere's sword had torn from
the kingdom of the West-Saxons, and part of
whom at least seem to have been known as the South-
Engle, may have been committed to the charge of a
bishop at Dorchester on the Thames.[2] The see of
Lichfield thus returned to its original form of a see
of the Mercians proper, though its bounds on the

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 5 ; Flor. Worc. a. 673.

[2] The details of this division are obscure (see Haddan and
Stubbs, " Councils," iii. 127-130). For Worcester we have Bæda's
authority (H. E. iv. 23), as well as for Dorchester (ibid.), though
this is disputed by Professor Stubbs (" Councils," iii. 130, note e).
The sees of Mercia and the Middle Angles were still both in
Sexulf's hands as late as 678, so that the separation of the latter
must be later than that year (Bæda, H. E. iv. 12). On Putta's
flight from Rochester, in 676, Sexulf gave him possession of a
church at Hereford, and there he died (Bæda, H. E. iv. 12) ;
but at what exact year the actual bishopric was established we
are not told.

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*The
Monastic
movement.*

westward now embraced much of the upper Severn valley with Cheshire and the lands northward to the Mersey.

The division of Mercia seems to have been begun in the face of an opposition from Bishop Winfrid, who held this vast diocese, which was only put an end to by Theodore's removal of him from his see in 675 ;[1] and years more had to be spent in completing the whole arrangement ; but throughout Theodore could count on the strenuous support of the king. It was possibly indeed the accession of Æthelred, who succeeded his brother Wulfhere in 675, that enabled Theodore to begin his work in Mercia in that year.[2] Æthelred was a king of a temper far other than that of his predecessor. Though the first days of his reign were disturbed by a strife with Kent, which was sinking more and more into dependence on the Mercian kings, and which seems to have endeavoured to resume its independence on Wulfhere's death, an effort that ended in fresh submission after the destruction of Rochester,[3] his temper was peaceful and religious ; and his activity mainly showed itself in a planting and endowment of monastic colonies which gradually transformed the face of the realm. In the monastic movement of this time two strangely contrasted impulses worked together to change the very aspect of the new England and the new English society. The one was the passion for solitude, the first outcome of the

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 6.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 675.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.

religious impulse given by the conversion; a
passion for communing apart with themselves and
with God which drove men into waste and woodland
and desolate fen. The other was the equally new
passion for social life on the part of the nation at
large, the outcome of its settlement and well-doing
on the conquered soil, and yet more of the influence
of the new religion, coming as it did from the social
civilization of the older world, and insensibly
drawing men together by the very form of its worship
and its belief. The first impulse showed itself most
vividly in the Irish missionaries, in Aidan's choice of
a lonely island for his settlement at Lindisfarne; in
Cuthbert's choice of a yet lonelier sandbank for his
later hermitage; in Ceadda's retirement in the quiet
solitude of Lichfield; or in Maidulf's withdrawal to
the woods of Malmesbury. But the close of the
seventh century had no sooner brought with it its
period of peace than the social impulse was quick to
undo the work which these solitaries had done.
Reverence for their holiness, with a desire to profit by
their teaching, drew devotee and scholar alike around
them, and the little community had no sooner vindi-
cated the new dignity which Christianity had given
to labour by winning field from the forest or meadow
from the marsh than it became the centre of a yet
wider attraction. The sanctity of such settlements
served in these early days of the new religion to
ensure for them peace and safety in the midst of
whatever war or social trouble might be disturbing the
country about them; and the longing for a life of
quiet industry which we see telling from this moment

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Its results.

upon the older English longing for war[1] drew men in crowds to these so-called monasteries.[2]

No settlements indeed could be more unlike the monasteries of later days. A vow of obedience and a vow of celibacy sufficed to hold the monks themselves, who formed the nucleus of each, together; and the necessity of labour for their maintenance left their intercourse with the settlers and dependents about them as free as that of other men. So far indeed were these homes from being bound by the strict ties of the Benedictine rule that they were often gathered on the loose Irish model of the family or the clan round some noble and wealthy person who sought devotional retirement. The looseness of their discipline, combined with a peculiar usage which in some cases brought monks and nuns together under the rule of the same abbess, exposed these communities at a later time to grave scandals; and in many cases the establishment of such a monastery was only a pretext under which a lord and his dependents exempted themselves from their national obligations of military service.[3] But even in such a case, the new aversion from warfare, the new longing for peaceful industry, was shown in the so-called monastery. Whatever were the causes, however, of this movement, it brought with it a transfer and re-adjustment of population which changed the whole

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 3. Vit. Abbat. (Hussey's " Bæda," p. 322)·
[2] Thus there were six hundred at Wearmouth soon after its establishment. Bæda, Vit. Abbatum (Hussey's " Bæda," p. 328).
[3] Bæda, Letter to Ecgberht (Hussey's "Bæda," p. 338), and H. E. lib. v. c. 23.

face of the country.   Here and there it revived the

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civilization of the past by bringing fresh life to the
ruins of a Roman town.   The solitude of its ruins
drew to them a hermit, and the sanctity of the hermit
drew after him a crowd of disciples and settlers that
again brought busy life to its desolation.   But it made
a more startling revolution by reclaiming the wilder
districts which civilization and social life had as yet
.never visited at all.   It broke the dreary line of the
northern coast with settlements which proved fore-
runners of some of our busiest ports.   It broke the
silence of waste and moor by houses like those of
Ripon and Lastingham.   It set agricultural colonies
in the depths of vast woodlands, as at Evesham or
Malmesbury, while by a chain of religious houses it
made its way step by step into the heart of the fens.

We can best realize the change which this move-
ment made in Mercia by following it here and
there across the face of the country.   In the
angle between the Cotswolds and the hills which
form the eastern boundary of the Severn valley
lay the largest of all the forests of Britain.   The
barren tract of low clays indeed which lay along the
base of the Cotswolds was for the most part free from
wood, but across the Avon, from the site of our Rugby
to that of our Evesham, ran a line of dense wood-
land which stretched away northward without a break
to the bounds of Cannock Chase,[1] and extended

*Forest of
Arden.*

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[1] A line of hamlets which bear the name of "Woodend,"
stretching across Staffordshire, just south of Walsall and
Wolverhampton, marks roughly the northern border of Arden.
Camden marks one by Shenstone, just south of Lichfield,

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eastward and westward from the valley of the Severn
to the limits of our Leicestershire.[1]   This was Arden,
the forest into whose depths Shakspere could stray
centuries later from his childhood's home at Stratford,
and in whose glades his fancy placed the scene of one
of his loveliest dramas.[2]   But in Shakspere's day its
mass was broken everywhere by the clearings of
the Warwickshire men ; towns were planted in the

another close to Walsall, and a third at Sedgely, south of
Wolverhampton.   But beyond these the ground was still richly
studded in Camden's day with outliers of the " Wooland,"
Walsall Wood, Essington Wood, Kingswood, and the like,
which show its extension at an earlier time.   See map of
Staffordshire in Camden's " Britannia " (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 633.

[1] As late as Elizabeth's time (and Shakspere's time) our
Warwickshire was parted into the "Feldon" and the "Woo-
land" or Wood-land; the first a tract of open pastures between
the Avon and the Cotswolds; the second, to the north of the
Avon, though not without "pastures and cornfields," yet in the
main "clothed with woods" (Camden, "Britannia," ed. 1753,
vol. i. 598, 606).   The clearing of the "wooland" was in fact
only due to the subsequent growth of its iron-works, which
" destroyed such prodigious quantities of wood that they laid the
country more open, and by degrees made room for the plough,"
so that "whereas within the memory of man they were supplied
with corn from the Feldon," writes Gibson in 1753, they
now grew more corn than they needed.   By a curious correla-
tive change, as the soil thus cleared proved far more fertile than
the clay lands of the Feldon, the latter, whose " fertile fields of
corn and verdant pastures" had delighted Camden's eye in
1606, had by Gibson's day become almost wholly pasture land.

[2] " As You Like It," act i. sc. i. " (Oliver). Where will the old
duke live? (Charles). They say he is already in the forest of
Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live
like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young
gentlemen flock to him every day and fleet the time carelessly,
as they did in the golden world."

very heart of its woodlands, and the miner had
thinned its clumps with his forges.   No such settle-
ment or traces of man broke its solitude when the
West Saxons gazed on the skirts of this huge forest
after their victory at Deorham.   Even the great
roads of the island refrained from piercing it, though

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MID - BRITAIN. 700 - 800.
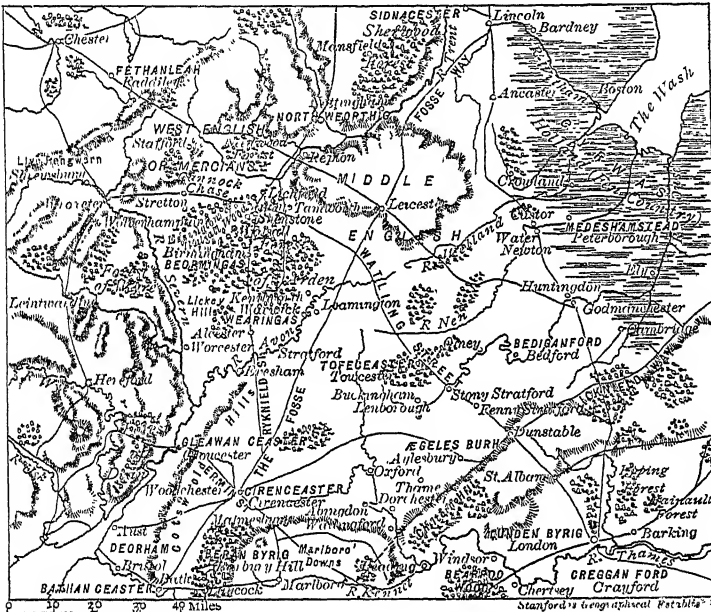
three of the main lines of communication through
Britain ran along its edges.   The Fosse-road
traversed the open clays between the Avon and the
Cotswolds.   The Watling Street struck along its
north-western border from our Rugby to Tamworth.
Even the Ryknield Way, which was probably a
mere trackway of the earliest times, crept along the

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Evesham.

western border of the forest beneath the slopes of the
Lickey Hills, and only struck across it in its northern
and narrower portion past the site of the later Bir-
mingham to the plain of the Tame.

In the broken and volcanic country along the
northern border of Arden, there was nothing as
yet to show the existence of those mineral treasures
which nowadays make this district lurid night and
day with the glare of iron-foundries, and hideous
with their cinder-heaps. All was still wild forest-
land where the little settlement of Wolverhampton
told of the wolves who carried off the farmers' sheep
and kine into the thickets, while further in its
depths, unconscious of its after greatness, lay the
little 'ham' of the Beormingas, our Birmingham.
It was only on its south-eastern border, in fact, that
life and industry as yet touched this woodland. Here,
between the forest edge and the slopes of the Cots-
wolds, the Avon made its way to the Severn valley,
and along the vale of the Avon were scattered a few
early settlements. Coventry indeed was not to rise for
centuries on its waters ; but Kenilworth and Leaming-
ton were, no doubt, even now quiet townships in this
district ; the tribe of the Wearingas must have already
set up that 'wick' of their own which was to give its
name of Wearingawick or Warwick to the whole tract
when it became shire-land ; Stratford marked the
place where the Roman road passed the river by its
paved ford on its way to the west ; and a little on-
ward a 'vill' of the Hwiccan or Mercian kings was
rising beside the ruined walls and towers which were
all that remained of the Roman Alcester. Heathendom

must still have lingered in the mighty woodland when
Bishop Ecgwine of Worcester carried the Gospel into
its depths ; and we may perhaps see Woden-worship-
ping miners at Alcester in the dæmons of his legend,
who drown the preacher's voice with the din of their
hammers.   But in spite of their hammers Ecgwine's
preaching left a lasting trace behind it.   The Bishop
heard how a swineherd, coming out of the dark forest
into a sunny glade, saw forms which were possibly
those of the Three Fair Women of the old German
mythology, seated round a mystic bush, and singing
their unearthly song.   In Ecgwine's fancy these women
transformed themselves into a vision of the Mother
of Christ ; and the silent glade soon became the site
of an abbey dedicated to her, and of a town which
sprang up under its shelter—the Evesham which was
to be hallowed in after time by the fall of Earl
Simon of Leicester.[1]

Wilder even than the western woodland was the
desolate fen-country on the eastern border of the
kingdom which stretched from the 'Holland,' the
sunk, hollow land of Lincolnshire, to the channel of the
Ouse, a wilderness of shallow waters and reedy islets,
wrapt in its own dark mist-veil and tenanted only
by flocks of screaming wild-fowl.   Here through
the liberality of King Wulfhere rose on the western

The Fen.

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[1] The abbey was founded in 709 (Haddan and Stubbs,
"Councils," iii. 278 *et seq.*). A life of Ecgwine may be found
in Macray's "Chronicle of Evesham;" but the rendering of
the figures in his vision as the 'Three Women' is a doubtful
suggestion of Mr. Wright. For the chronological difficulties
of the story, see Stubbs, Dict. Christ. Biog., art. "Ecgwine,"
vol. ii. p. 62.

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border of the great morass the abbey of Medesham-stead, a community which grew in after time into our Peterborough. On its northern edge an obscure hermit, Botulf, founded a little house which as ages went by became our Botulf's town or Boston.[1] Further in the fen itself the queen of Ecgfrid, Æthelthryth or Ætheldreda, found a refuge from her husband in the low rise amidst its waters which is crowned nowadays with the noble minster of Ely.[2] It was in the very heart of the fen that Guthlac, a youth of the royal race of Mercia, sought a refuge from the world in the solitude of Crowland.[3] The early life of Guthlac[4] marks the wild barbarism of the times. He spent it after the fashion of young warriors, in private feuds, in sacking and burning town and homestead, and carrying off booty from his foes. Suddenly, as he lay sleepless in the forest among his sleeping war-band, there rose before him the thought of his crimes and of the doom that waited on him. Such thoughts were stirred in many hearts no doubt by the new Christian faith; but in none did they find a quicker answer. The birds waking with the dawn only roused his comrades to hear Guthlac's farewell. At the abbey of Repton, the burying-place as yet of the royal line of Mercia, he shore off the long hair which

[1] Botulf was visited about 670 by Ceolfrid, afterwards Abbot of Wearmouth, Anon. Hist. Abbatum. Bæda, "Opera Minora" (ed. Stevenson), p. 319.

[2] For Ely and its name, see Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19, where he gives the story of Ætheldreda.

[3] For Crowland, even in the sixteenth century, see Camden's "Britannia" (ed. 1753), vol. i. p. 551.

[4] The name of Guthlac was that of his house, the Guthlacings.

marked the noble; and then, moved by the life of hermit saints which he read there, betook himself to the heart of the fen. Its birds became his friends; they perched unhindered on shoulder and knee, and rested in the thatch that covered the little cell he had hollowed out in what seems to have been a plundered burial-ground. "He who in cleanness of heart is one with God, all things are one with him," commented the recluse; "he who denies himself the converse of men wins the converse of birds and beasts and the company of angels." But it was harder than Guthlac fancied to escape the converse of men. His solitude was broken by crowds of devotees, by abbot and monk, by thegn and ceorl, as they flocked over the fen to the solitary's cell; and so great was the reverence which he won that two years after his death the stately abbey of Crowland was raised over his tomb. Earth was brought in boats to form a site; the buildings rested on oaken piles driven into the marsh, a stone church replaced the hermit's cell, and the toil of the new brotherhood changed the pools around them into fertile meadow land.[1]

If we turn from the Fens to the Thames valley we see the new religion gathering new centres of social life along the line of the great river. A wild legend, the legend of S. Frideswide, first gives us a glimpse in the midst of the eighth century of the future Oxford, as yet no doubt but a few fishermen's huts creeping up along the line of the later "Fish Street" from the ford across the Thames to the little monastery that

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The Thames Valley.

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[1] Guthlac's life is printed in Acta Sanct. Boll. at April xi.

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had risen over the saint's remains ;[1] and a little further along the river, in some meadows beside its southern bank, there had already risen in the later days of Ealdhelm a religious house which was to acquire a far different celebrity from that of Frideswide, the abbey under whose walls grew up the town of Abingdon.[2] As Abingdon rose into light, the brief greatness of a spot lower down the river was passing away. The present village of Dorchester probably occupies the site of a Roman borough ; and the dyke that guarded the town, as well as a huge hill-fort of the Britons in its neighbourhood, shows that the spot had been of importance in very early times. Here Birinus fixed the bishop's stool of the West Saxons, and here in the presence of Oswald the West-Saxon king submitted to baptism. But the removal of the West-Saxon bishopric to Winchester gave a fatal blow to the place ; and even a later transfer to it of the Mercian bishopric failed to raise it into

[1] Frideswide is not mentioned by Bæda, but an Anglo-Saxon catalogue of saints states her to have been buried at Oxford, and Domesday shows her canons to have been long established there. Her story first appears in Malmesbury, and is probably a genuine tradition. The expanded life by Prior Philip may be found in the Bollandist "Acta Sanctorum," Oct. viii. p. 560 ; and see article in "Dictionary of Christian Biography," vol. ii. p. 563.

[2] The early history of Abingdon is obscure. Hean, a nephew of Cissa, an under-king of our Berkshire in the days of Cent-wine, seems to have founded the original monastery on folk-land at Abba's dun, "where Chilswell farm now stands," says Professor Bright, "Early English Church History," p. 262. Ine, however, took back the land, and when the house was refounded twenty years later it was set up on its present site, then called Sheovesham.

importance. Yet further along the Thames valley
the great foundation of Henry I. had not begun the
transformation of the settlement of the Readings
into our thriving Reading; nor was Windsor to be
crowned for centuries yet by the group of royal and
ecclesiastical buildings which preserve the glories of
the Plantagenets. But the bishops of the East
Saxons were already establishing their home at
Fulham; in the little house amid the marshes of the
Tyburn which claimed King Sæberht as its founder
lay a germ of the coming Westminster; and if no
great abbey within its walls, besides its own church
of St. Paul, marked the devotion of London, that of
its bishop Erconwald was shown by his two founda-
tions; one for himself at Chertsey, the first trace of
life we have as yet encountered in the new Surrey;
the other for his sister Æthelburh at Barking. The
legends of Barking, as Bæda has preserved them,
are full of the poetry of monastic life, of those
visions of angelic glory, those sounds of angelic
music, that gave beauty to its very trivialities.
Light above all was the plaything of this religious
fancy. It was the resting of an unearthly bright-
ness on the spot that guided the nuns of Barking in
the choice of their burial-ground; the light, they
said, that was to receive the souls of its hand-
maidens had shown the place where their bodies
should rest till the rising again. " Let your candle
burn as it may," murmured a sister of the same
house to those who watched her dying through the
night, " it is no light of mine ; my light will come to
me at the dawn of day !" The body of their dead

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Mid-
Britain.

abbess as the nuns in vision saw it floating heaven-
ward glowed with a celestial splendour beyond
the sun.[1]

In a survey of the rest of the Mercian kingdom we
meet with little more than names, but even names
have a living interest when they reveal to us for the
first time the existence of communities which have
lived on for a thousand years since, and form actual
elements in the England of to-day. As we pass
from the valley of the Thames to the valley of the
Severn we find that a new English borough, the borough
of Cirencester, has already sprung to life on the wreck
of the Roman Corinium.[2] The foundation of a
monastery by an under-king of the Hwiccas within
its walls reveals to us the springing up of a like new
life in another of the cities which had been wrecked
by Ceawlin's inroad, the city of Bath.[3] Gloucester,
though we do not hear of it as yet, may have been
growing into being on the site of the third city which
defied the West-Saxon king, that of Glevum ; but
the new masters of the lower Severn valley seem to
have found their centre higher up the river, on the
very border of the forest of Wyre, in a town whose
existence the establishment of one of Theodore's
bishoprics discloses to us, the town of Wyre-ceaster
or Worcester.[4] If we pass from the Severn to Mid-

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 7, 8.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 628.

[3] A monastery at Bath was founded by this under-king
Osric in 676.

[4] Worcester was from the first the seat of the Hwiccian
bishopric.

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Britain itself, we find as yet no mention of North-ampton on the upland that now bears its name, nor any trace of the return of life to the ruins of Tow-cester; but Medeshamstede, as we have seen, was already rising where the upland sloped to the fen, and the little monastery of Oundle shows that life was pushing still higher up the valley of the Nen. Along the Trent itself we find few traces of the new social impulse, though Repton had been called to life on its upper waters, by the withdrawal of Abbess Ælfrida to a religious life; and further along the river a like house had gathered at Burton. But the Mer-cian kings were already established at Tamworth; the Pecsætan had no doubt found a centre in the North-weorthig, which has become our Derby, and the Middle-Engle in our Leicester; while on the great rise to the south of the Humber we see not only communities established at Sidnacester and Bardney, but a new borough of the Lindiswaras, with a stone church founded by Paulinus as its spiritual centre, growing up amongst the ruins of the Roman Lindum.[1]

Ecgfrith of Northumbria.

Such was the Mercia whose ecclesiastical organiza-tion Theodore was still engaged in completing, when in 678 he was invited by King Ecgfrith to undertake a like organization of Northumbria.[2] Isolated as it had now become from the rest of Britain, Northum-bria was far from having sunk from its old renown either in government or war. It still remained, in-deed, first among the English states. Ecgfrith had

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. c. 16. "Lindocolinæ civitatis."

[2] Eddi. "Life of Wilfrid," c. xxiv. "Theodorum cum mune-ribus . . . invitaverunt."

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succeeded his father Oswiu in 670,[1] and though he
made no effort to reverse his father's policy as regards
southern Britain, or to attempt to build up again a
supremacy over its states, he showed himself reso-
lute to enlarge the bounds of his kingdom by con-
quests over the Welsh. The Welsh states across the
western moors had owned, at least from Oswald's
time, the Northumbrian supremacy, but little actual
advance had been made by the English in this
quarter since the victory of Chester, and northward
of the Ribble the land between the moors and the
sea still formed a part of the British kingdom of
Cumbria. It was from this tract, from what we
now know as northern Lancashire and the Lake district,
that Ecgfrith's armies chased the Britons in the early
years of his reign.[2] The British clergy still fled before
the conqueror's sword, and from the sacred spots which
they deserted large grants were made by Ecgfrith to
the see of York in the country between the Ribble
and the Mersey, in Amounderness, and in Cartmell,
or the vale of the Duddon,[3] the three districts which

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 5.

[2] This conquest, like the after conquest of the Picts, lies between
his accession in 670 and his strife with Wulfhere of Mercia in
675. See Eddi, " Life of Wilfrid," c. xx.

[3] Wilfrid claimed for his see, " ea loca sancta in diversis
regionibus, quæ clerus Brytannus, aciem gladii hostilis manu
gentis nostræ fugiens, deseruit. Erat quippe Deo placabile
donum, quod religiosi reges tam multas terras Deo ad serviendum
pontifici nostro conscripserunt ; et haec sunt nomina regionum
juxta Rippel, et in Gaedyne, et in regione Dunutinga, et in
Caetlævum, in cæterisque locis."—Eddi, " Life of Wilfrid,"
c. xvii. Mr. Raine in a note on this passage of Eddi says :
" Peter of Blois in his missing life of Wilfrid describes these

together make up our present Lancashire ;[1] but there
was no break in the general policy of the later English
conquests, and the rest of the British population re-
mained as tributaries on the soil.[2]

By the conquest of this western district North-
umbria now stretched uninterruptedly from sea to sea
from the southern border of Elmet as far north as
the city of Carlisle. Carlisle is of interest as the
first instance which we have met with of a city in
which there seems to have been no break of muni-
cipal life as it passed into English hands. Only a few
years after its conquest by Ecgfrith we find a monastery
founded there ;[3] while the city itself and its district

districts thus : ' Scilicet Rible et Hasmundesham et Mar-
chesiæ ' (Leland, col. ed. 1774, iii. p. 110). By these he seems
to mean Amounderness in north Lancashire, and the ' terra
inter Ripham et Mersham ' (Domes. Book), the country between
the Ribble and the Mersey." He points out too that if Gaedyne
be identified with Gilling near Richmond, and Dunutinga, or as
Peter of Blois calls it, Duninga, with the country watered by the
river Duddon, as well as Caetlaevum with Cartmell, we should
have in these districts the whole of the western part of the
archdeaconry of Richmond, and thus account for their ecclesias-
tical connection through it with the see of York.

[1] Cartmell is that district of Lancashire which, isolated from
the rest of the county, lies north of Ulverston Bay ; while
Amounderness may at this time have included the whole tract
between the Lune and the Ribble. See Camden's " Britannia "
(1753), vol. ii. p. 975, where Amounderness is made to include
the Fylde.

[2] Sim. Durh., Historia de S. Cuthberto ; Twysden, Dec Script.
p. 69. King Ecgfrith gave " Cartmell et omnes Britannos cum
eo " to St. Cuthbert.

[3] Bæda, " Life of Cuthbert," c. xxvii. It seems probable that
after Ecgfrith's death his queen entered this monastery. Ibid.
c. xxviii.

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became part of the possessions of the see of Lindis-
farne,[1] and it is as he stands by its Roman fountain
that Cuthbert hears the news of Nectansmere.   But
the conquest of this district was quickly followed by
fresh gains in the north, where Ecgfrith attacked
with the same success both the Scots beyond Clydes-
dale and the Picts over the Firth of Forth.[2]   The war
indeed in this quarter was forced on him by the Picts,
who rose against the yoke of tribute to which they
had submitted under Oswiu, and marched with an
army which seems to have been gathered from their
whole territory in the Highlands on the English border.
Ecgfrith met the attack with a comparatively small
force, but his victory was so complete that as the
Northumbrian Chronicler tells us, two rivers were
filled with the corpses of the slain, and the Picts
were reduced to so complete a subjection that their
territory on the northern bank of the Forth was
reckoned from this time as Northumbrian ground.[3]
How far Ecgfrith would have pushed his conquests
in this quarter had his hands been left free we cannot
tell, but the war with the Picts was hardly over when
he was forced to meet a more formidable attack on
his southern frontier.   Wulfhere, as we have seen
had carried the supremacy of Mercia not only over
the whole of Mid-Britain, but even as far as the
British Channel; and it was as the practical master

[1] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. i. c. 9.   "Lugubaliam quæ Luel
vocatur in circuitu quindecim milliaria habentem in augmentum
suscepit" (Cuthbertus).

[2] Eddi. c. xxi.   "Triumphos ad Aquilonem super Brittones et
Scottos."

[3] Eddi. c. xix.

of all Britain south of the Humber, and with a force
drawn from every one of its peoples, that he marched
on Northumbria with a demand of subjection and
tribute.[1] Ecgfrith however was as successful against
the Mercians as against the Picts, and though as
before his army was inferior in number to that of
his opponents, after a bloody encounter he drove
Wulfhere from the field, and forced the Mercian king
in turn not only to surrender the land of the Lindis-
waras, which he had taken from Oswiu in that king's
later days,[2] but to pay tribute to Northumbria.[3]

The death of Wulfhere, which immediately followed *Its monastic colonies.*
this triumph, in 675, and the accession of the more
peaceful Æthelred, removed for the time all pressure
from the south, and left Northumbria free to carry on
a work of industrial development, which was producing
results even more striking than those which we have
already watched in Mid-Britain. Here as there the
movement was in name a monastic one, but the
establishment of the monastic colonies which carried
life and culture over the land was furthered in the
north more than elsewhere by the enormous sweeps of
waste which still made up the bulk of Northumbria.
Nowhere was this waste so continuous as along the
eastern coast. Save at the passage of the Tyne, where
the Ælian bridge must now have been dropping into

[1] Eddi, c. xx. "Ulfharius rex Merciorum . . omnes australes
populos adversum regnum nostrum concitans, non tam ad
bellandum quam ad redigendum sub tributo, servili animo, non
regente Deo, proponebat."

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 3.

[3] "Occisis innumeris regem fugavit, regnumque ejus sub tributo
distribuit."—Eddi, c. xx. Bæda, H. E. iv. 12.

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decay, hardly a single settlement had been made along this coast under the Roman rule ; and though the Engle conquerors had planted their hams and tuns along its river-valleys, such as those of the Tweed or the Tyne, and had set a few fishing-villages along the shore, the bulk of the country was still untilled and unclaimed of man, and thus passed into the folk-land which lay at the disposal of the Northumbrian kings. Though Edinburgh had been an English fortress since the days of Eadwine, and we already catch sight of Dunbar looking out over its stormy seas,[1] the whole space between them, north of the Lammermoor, was still folk-land in Oswald's day, when it was granted to the monastery at Lindisfarne.[2] It was from the waste country south of the Lammermoor that lands almost as wide were bestowed by Oswiu on a monastery which Ebba was establishing on the coast at Coldingham, as well as on the house of Melrose. The whole of the pastoral country on the banks of the Bowmont between the forest of Jedburgh and the Cheviots seems to have been first reclaimed when it was granted by Oswiu to Cuthbert during his abode at Melrose.[3] South of the Tweed as far as Bam-- borough, and reaching inland as far as the valley of the Till, lay as desolate a region, which formed part of the domain that Oswald carved out of his fork-land for the neighbouring holy island of Lindisfarne.[4]

[1] Eddi, c. xxxviii., where King Ecgfrith sends Wilfrid a prisoner in "urbem suam Dynbaer."

[2] Hist. de S. Cuthberto ; Twysden, Dec. Script., col. 68.

[3] Hodgson Hinde on "Lothian." Archæol. Journ. vol. xiv. p. 311.

[4] Hist. de S. Cuthb. ; Twysden, Dec. Script., col. 69.

Lesser tracts were carved out of the district which we   CHAP. VII.

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now call Durham, and which remained for centuries
a wild and almost uninhabited moorland, for the little
houses along its shore at Ebb-chester and Hartlepool;
while the grants of Ecgfrith and Oswiu to Wearmouth
and to Whitby show that the coast district preserved
the same character away to the south; in fact, when
describing the site which King Oidilwald gave for the
monastery of Lastingham in the moorlands which are
now known as the forest of Pickering, Bæda calls it
a place "which looked more like a lurking-place for
robbers and a retreat for wild beasts than a habitation
for man."[1]

Of these colonies the northernmost, save a little   *Their
secular
character.*
house at Tyningham beside the Dunbar, was the mon-
astery which Ebba founded at Coldingham, to the
south of the great promontory which still preserves
her memory in its name of St. Abb's head. Ebba
was of the royal line, a daughter of Æthelfrith and
a sister of Oswald and Oswiu;[2] and the character
which her double house of monks and nuns took even
during her life-time shows how much stronger a part
was played in these settlements by the social than by
the religious impulse. "I have looked into every
one's chamber and beds," a heavenly visitant is said
to have declared to an Irish ascetic, who reported
it to the abbess, "and found none but you busy
about the care of the soul; since all of these folk, both
men and women, either indulge themselves in sloth
and sleep, or wake to commit sin. For even the cells

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 19; Life of Cuthbert, c. x.

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that were built for praying or reading are now con-
verted into places of feasting, drinking, and talking,
while the virgins dedicated to God, whensoever they
are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving fine
garments."[1] A fire which swept away the abbey
of Coldingham was held to have been a judgment of
heaven on the worldliness of its inmates,[2] but the
tendency to create such settlements only grew stronger
as the days went on. Under Ecgfrith's successors the
practice became almost universal among the higher
nobles and thegns of the court of procuring grants
of folk-land under the pretext of establishing a re-
ligious house, of drawing to them monks from other
monasteries, as well as inducing some of their own
servants to take the tonsure and promise monastic
obedience to their rule, while themselves often re-
maining laymen and profiting by their name of abbots
to escape from all obligation of military service to the
realm.[3] However hotly statesmen or divines might

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 25.

[2] For the gross moral abuses which sometimes grew out of
this loose system of monasticism see letters of Boniface to
Æthelbald, Herefrith, and Ecgberht; Stubbs and Haddan,
" Councils," vol. iii. 351, 357, 358.

[3] In 749 Æthelbald of Mercia freed all monasteries and
churches throughout his realm from taxation and service save for
the building of bridges and the defence of strongholds (see the
charter in Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," vol. iii. p. 386) ; and
the same exemption was given in the other kingdoms. Bæda
gives a detailed picture of the abuses which resulted in his letter
to Ecgberht : " At alii graviore adhuc flagitio, quum sint ipsi
laici et nullius vitæ regularis vel usu exerciti, vel amore præditi,
data regibus pecunia, emunt sibi sub prætextu monasteriorum
construendorum territoria in quibus suæ liberius vacent libidini,
et hæc insuper in jus sibi hæreditarium edictis regalibus faciunt

protest from their different points of view against
a practice which degraded religion while it weakened
the military and political organization of the realm,[1]
it is impossible not to see in such settlements as
these an effort of Englishmen to free themselves
from the trammels of their older existence and to
find a more social and industrial life.

Labour indeed first rose into honour through this *Their*
early monasticism. The story of Eosterwini is typical *influence on labour.*

ascribi, ipsas quoque litteras privilegiorum suorum quasi veraciter
Deo dignas, pontificum, abbatum, et potestatum seculi obtinent
subscriptione confirmari. Sicque usurpatis sibi agellulis sive
vicis, liberi exinde a divino simul et humano servitio, suis tantum
inibi desideriis laici monachis imperantes deserviunt : imo non
monachos ibi congregant, sed quoscunque ob culpam inobedientiæ
veris expulsos monasteriis alicubi forte oberrantes invenerint, aut
evocare monasteriis ipsi valuerint ; vel certe quos ipsi de suis
satellitibus ad suscipiendam tonsuram promissa sibi obedientia
monachica invitare quiverint . . . . Sic per annos circiter triginta,
hoc est, ex quo Aldfrid rex humanis rebus ablatus est, provincia
nostra vesano illo errore dementata est, ut nullus pene exinde
præfectorum extiterit qui non hujusmodi sibi monasterium in
diebus suæ præfecturæ comparaverit, suamque simul conjugem
pari reatu nocivi mercatus astrinxerit ; ac prævalente pessima con-
suetudine ministri quoque regis ac famuli idem facere sategerint."
—Hussey's " Bæda," pp. 339, 340. (See also H. E. lib. v. c. 23.)
    [1] We see the kings resisting the excessive creation of such
houses, doubtless on this ground, from the beginning of the
eighth century. Boniface, in a letter written between 744 and
747, remonstrated with Æthelbald of Mercia, "quod multa
privilegia ecclesiarum et monasteriorum fregisses ;" and adds,
"privilegia ecclesiarum in regno Anglorum intemerata et inviolata
permanserunt usque ad tempora Ceolredi Regis Mercionum et
Osredi Regis Derorum et Berniciorum." (Stubbs and Haddan,
"Councils," iii. 354, 355.) Ceolred was king of Mercia 709-
715 ; Osred of Northumbria, 705-716.

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of the change which this movement brought about in men's conceptions of the dignity of toil. Eosterwini was a thegn of king Ecgfrith's, who at the age of twenty-four "laid down his arms," and entering the monastery of Wearmouth threw himself cheerfully into the toil that he found going on about him. "It was a pleasure to him to be employed along with the rest of the brethren in winnowing and grinding corn, in milking the ewes and cows, in working in the bakehouse, the garden, and the kitchen, and in every other occupation in the monastery. . . . When he went out anywhere for the furtherance of the business of the monastery, wherever he found the brethren at work it was his wont to join them forthwith in their labour, whether by guiding the plough-handle, or working iron with the forge-hammer, or wielding the winnowing-fan." [1] We see the same new drift of feeling yet more picturesquely in the figure of Owini, a head thegn of the household of Ecgfrith's queen, as he stands at the gate of the monastery of Lastingham, "clad only in a plain garment, and carrying an axe and mattock in his hand, thereby intimating that he did not go to the monastery to live idle as some do, but to labour." Once admitted as a brother, Owini carried out his purpose; "for as he was less capable of meditating on the Holy Scriptures, so he the more earnestly applied himself to the labour of his hands . . . . and whilst the brethren were engaged within in reading he was busy without at work." [2] The mere sight of nobles

[1] Vit. Abbatum ; Hussey's "Bæda," p. 322.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. iii.

such as these laying down the noble's arms, and CHAP. VII.
voluntarily sharing with ceorl and serf about them The Church
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the labour of their hands, must have raised labour Kingdoms.
itself into a new esteem among their fellow-men, 659-
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and aided in that development of industry which
was changing the whole face of the country.

But the movement did more than exalt labour. *Their
influence
on
poetry.*
To its social side we are indebted for the birth of
our literature. While Ealdhelm was singing his
songs on the bridge at Malmesbury, a singer of far
other sort was building up a great English poem
on the Northumbrian coast.[1] The most notable and
wealthy of the religious houses of Northumbria was
that of Streonashalh, an abbey which Oswiu reared
for Hild and the child he had vowed to God as a
thankoffering for his victory at the Winwæd.[2] The
love of solitude and retirement which the northern
Church drew from its Celtic founders told in the
choice of the spot. Much of its loneliness indeed
has now passed away : for sunset, as it strikes along
the gorge of the Esk in a glory of colour, lights up
as with fire the ranks of red-tiled houses in which the
busy seaport of Whitby clings to the slopes on either
side the river-mouth. But on the cliff above it the
weather-beaten ruins of an exquisite abbey church,
which rose at a later time on the site of Hild's
monastery, still stand out dark and lonely against the
sky, and as we look from them over land and sea,

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[1] We do not know the exact date of Cædmon's poem, but. as
it was read to Hild, who died in 680, it must have been composed
some time in Ecgfrith's reign.

[2] In 657 (Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 24).

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the solitude which she chose for her home comes back
to us. Whitby lies hidden in its river-valley ; the
bleak moors around are thinly threaded by half-
buried lines of woodland, for the very trees take
shelter in deep gorges which carry the moor waters
to the sea. The fringe of culture that now creeps
along the moorland's edge, the cottages dotted
over the distance, the fishing hamlets huddled at
the mouth of streamlets whose hollows break the
crumbling line of marly cliffs, the herring-boats
scattered over the colourless sea, the smoke trail of
vessels on the grey horizon, hardly lessen the im-
pression of loneliness. As we look over the wide
stretch of country whose billowy swells and undula-
tions lift themselves dark at eventide from the mist-
veil that lies white around them, we see again the
waste in which Hild reared her home, its grey reaches
of desolate water, skimmed but by the white wings
of gull or albatross, its dark tracts of desolate moor
silent save for the wolf's howl or the eagle's scream.

Cædmon.   The stern grandeur of the spot blends fitly with
the thought of the poet who broke its stillness with
the first great song that English singer had wrought
since our fathers came to Britain. For the memory
that endears Whitby to us is not that of Hild or of
the scholars and priests who gathered round her. Her
abbey indeed became from the first the greatest foun-
dation of the north, for Hild was the daughter of
Hereric and the great-grandchild of Ælla, and though
years of change had passed by and her line had ceased
to rule, she still drew a reverence as one of the last of
the royal stock of Deira. Her counsel was sought

even by nobles and kings; and the double monastery over which she ruled became a seminary of bishops and priests.[1] The sainted John of Beverley was among her scholars. But the name which really throws glory over Whitby is the name neither of king nor bishop but of a cowherd of the house.[2] Though well advanced in years Cædmon had learnt nothing of the art of verse, the alliterative jingle so common among his fellows, "wherefore being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp come towards him than he rose from the board and went homewards. Once when he had done thus, and gone from the feast to the stable, where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep One who said, greeting him by name, ' Sing, Cædmon, some song to Me.' ' I cannot sing,' he answered ; ' for this cause left I the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered, ' However that be, you shall sing to Me.' ' What shall I sing ? ' rejoined Cædmon. ' The beginning of created things,' replied He. When the cowherd stood before Hild at daybreak and told his dream, abbess and brethren alike concluded ' that heavenly grace had been given him by the Lord.' They translated for Cædmon a passage in Holy Writ, bidding him, if he could, put the same into verse. The next morning he gave it them composed in excellent verse ; whereon the abbess, understanding the divine grace in the man, bade him quit the secular habit and take on him the monastic life."

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 23.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 24.

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Cædmon's
Poem.

Piece by piece the sacred story was thus thrown into Cædmon's poem. "He sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, and of all the history of Israel; of their departure from Egypt and entering into the Promised Land; of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of the terror of future judgment, the horror of hell-pangs, and the joys of heaven." To men of that day this sudden burst of song seemed a thing necessarily divine. " Others after him strove to compose religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he learned the art of poetry not from men nor of men, but from God." It is hard for a modern reader to enter into Bæda's enthusiasm, for not only are parts of the poems which have passed under Cædmon's name due to other writers, though of the same poetic school, but they have reached us only in fragments of a later West-Saxon version,[1] and their Biblical paraphrases are often literal and tedious. But where the herdsman gives the rein to his own fancy, he at once shows himself a great poet. He wrought no change indeed in the outer form of English song. His verse is like that of other singers, accented and alliterative, without conscious art or development or the delight that

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[1] Save nine lines of the original opening which have been preserved in an early manuscript of Bæda's history. Recent criticism restricts the work of Cædmon to the poem of " Genesis," assigning " Exodus " and "David " to a nameless successor, and the closing fragment, known as " Christ and Satan," to an altogether later time. Even in the " Genesis," verses 245-851, which include the famous passage about Satan, are now believed to be an interpolation in Cædmon's work, drawn perhaps from a lost Old German poem.

springs from reflection, a verse swift and direct, but
leaving behind it a sense of strength rather than of
beauty, obscured too by harsh metaphors and involved
construction. But it is eminently the verse of
warriors, the brief passionate expression of brief pas-
sionate emotions. Image after image, phrase after
phrase, starts out vivid, harsh, and emphatic. The
very metre is rough with a sort of self-violence and
repression; the verses fall like sword-strokes in the
thick of battle. His love of natural description, the
background of melancholy which gives its pathos to
English verse, Cædmon only shared with earlier
singers. But the faith of Christ had brought in, as
we have seen, new realms of fancy. The legends of
the heavenly light, Bæda's story of "The Sparrow,"
show the side of English temperament to which
Christianity appealed—its sense of the vague, vast
mystery of the world and of man, its dreamy revolt
against the narrow bounds of experience and life.
It was this new poetic world which combined with
the old in the epic of Cædmon. On the other hand
the enthusiasm for the Christian God, faith in whom
had been bought so dearly by years of desperate
struggle, breaks out in long rolls of sonorous epithets
of praise and adoration. The temper of the poet
brings him near to the earlier fire and passion of the
Hebrew, as the events of his time brought him near
to the old Bible history with its fights and wander-
ings.[1] "The wolves sing their dread evensong; the
fowls of war, greedy of battle, dewy feathered,

[1] The "Exodus," as I have said, is now assigned to another
singer : but he is of Cædmon's school.

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screamed around the host of Pharaoh," as wolf
howled and eagle screamed round the host of Penda.
Everywhere Cædmon is a type of the new grandeur,
depth and fervour of tone which the German race
was to give to the religion of the East.

*Effect of
monastic
movement
on art.*
English poetry however was far from ending with
Cædmon. His successors rivalled him in grandeur
and sometimes surpassed him in art. The lyrics and
eclogues of Cynewulf,[1] a minstrel at the Northumbrian
court in the middle of the century, are the noblest
and most finished monuments of Old English verse ;
and the bulk of the poems which we now possess
in West-Saxon versions are held by modern critics to
be in reality fragments of the poetic literature which
at this time flourished so abundantly in Northumbria.
Meanwhile the same impulse that gave Englishmen
their earliest poetry brought back to Britain its art.
Benedict Biscop had not witnessed the triumph of
his party in the Synod of Whitby, for he had already
departed on a fresh pilgrimage to Rome ; and though
he accompanied Theodore on his journey to England,
it was only at the close of a fresh pilgrimage to the
shrine of the Apostles that he again appeared in
Northumbria in the year 674.[2] Ecgfrith at once
made him a grant from the folk-land at the mouth of
the Wear ; but Benedict had hardly begun the erection
of his monastery when he passed into Gaul to find

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[1] Hazlitt's ed. of Warton's Hist. Engl. Poetry, vol. ii. Introd.
pp. 16, 17.
[2] The life of Benedict is given by Bæda in the opening of his
" Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth." Hussey's Bæda, p. 316
et seq.

masons "who could build him a church of stone after
the Roman style."[1]   Nothing shows more vividly the

utter destruction of the Roman life in Britain than
the fact that with Roman buildings still rising, even
if half ruined, before their eyes, the very tradition of
the building art had passed away, and that architecture
had to be brought back to Britain as a foreign thing.
With architecture [2] returned other arts.   Glass-making
was as unknown in the island as building, and it was
again from Gaul that Benedict imported glass-makers
to glaze the windows of his church and to teach
Englishmen their art.[3]   It was in the same way to the
sacred vessels and vestments which he was forced
to bring from abroad that the English owed their
knowledge of the arts of gold-work and embroidery,
in both of which they soon came to excel.   A later
visit to Rome brought to their knowledge the art of
painting, and the stiff Byzantine figures with which
Benedict adorned the interior of his church, the ring
of Apostles around its apse with the Virgin in their
midst, the stories from Gospel history which lined its
southern wall, and the Apocalyptical visions which
covered its northern wall, whether they were paintings
or mosaics, are memorable as the first instances in

[1] " Gallias petens cæmentarios qui lapideam sibi ecclesiam
juxta Romanorum . . . morem facerent . . . attulit."—Bæda,
Vit. Abbat. p. 319.

[2] So famous did the Northumbrian architects become, that
they were called even over the Forth by King Naiton of the
Picts.   Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 21.

[3] " Vitri factores artifices Britanniis eatenus incognitos . . . .
et Anglorum ex eo gentem hujusmodi artificium nosse ac discere,
fecerunt."—Bæda, Vit. Abbat. p. 319.

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and the
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*Bishop
Wilfrid.*
the new England of an art which was to give us a
Reynolds and a Turner.

No buildings in northern Britain could vie with
Benedict's Church at Wearmouth save the churches
which his friend Wilfrid was raising at the same time
in the western moorlands at Ripon, and at Hexham in
the valley of the Tyne. Work of artistic restoration
was as much a passion with the one as the other, and
if Wilfrid had visited Gaul in part for the purpose of
consecration, it was in part too to gather " the builders
and teachers of nearly every art whom he brought with
him in his train on his return to Britain." [1] Through
the nine years that followed his arrival at York, the
greatness of Bishop Wilfrid seemed to vie with that of
Ecgfrith. The new monastic foundations regarded them-
selves as his monasteries, and at a later time he could
boast of the thousands of his monks, while the North-
umbrian thegns sent their children to be brought up in
his household, whether with the end of their becoming
clerks or of serving the king as secular nobles. His
wealth and generosity seemed boundless. At one
time he entertained Ecgfrith in a feast that lasted
three days and three nights ; his gifts were lavished
on his monasteries and clergy ; and his train as he
rode through the country was like an army in its
numbers and in the kingly splendour of its vesture
and weapons.[2] Friendly as the relations of the
King and Bishop were at first, we can hardly

[1] Eddi. c. xiv. " Cum cantoribus Ædde et Eonan, et cæmen-
tariis, omnisque pæne artis institoribus, regionem suam rediens."

[2] Eddi. c. xxiv. " Innumerum exercitum sodalium regalibus
vestmentis et armis ornatum."

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*Theodore
in
Northumbria.*

wonder that a pomp such as this brought dissension between them,[1] or that Ecgfrith seized on the projects of Theodore as enabling him to curtail a diocese which stretched over the whole extent of his realm.

In 678 Theodore appeared in Northumbria at the King's summons, and we must presume that Wilfrid's resistance to his plans was notorious, for without waiting for his presence the primate deposed him from his see, and proceeded to the division of his diocese. The same plan of falling back on the older tribal divisions was followed here as elsewhere. Eata was set at Hexham as bishop of the Bernicians, and Bosa at York as bishop of the Deirans, while Eadhed was set as bishop over the Lindiswaras.[2] After a formal protest against the primate's action Wilfrid left Northumbria to carry his appeal to Rome, where an agent of Theodore's awaited him on his arrival, and the cause was formally heard and debated at the Papal court. In his appeal Wilfrid virtually consented to a division of his diocese if Rome saw need of this,[3] but he claimed the annulling of the sentence of deposition as uncanonical, and his claim was allowed. With bulls and letters from the Papal see[4] he again appeared at Ecgfrith's court; but they

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[1] The story of Wilfrid's friends was that the quarrel began in Ecgfrith's domestic troubles with his queen Ætheldreda and the part which Wilfrid took in them.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.

[3] "Et si rursus in eadem parochia, cui præfui, præsules adhibere præviderit, saltem tales jubeat prævidere promovendos, cum quibus possim, pacifica atque tranquilla inter nos concordia obtinente, Deo unanimiter deservire."—Eddi. c. xxx.

[4] Eddi. c. xxxiv.

were rejected as having been obtained by bribery,[1] and
by the order of the Witan Wilfrid was thrown into
prison, and only released at the end of nine months.
Even then Ecgfrith's hostility prevented his finding
a refuge in either Mercia or Wessex, and he at last
only succeeded in hiding himself behind the screen
of the Andredsweald among the South Saxons.

The South Saxons were the one English people who
still remained pagan, for though their king Ædilwalch
had been baptized at Wulfhere's bidding some twenty
years before,[2] and an Irish missionary, Dicul, had set
up a little monastery at Bosham, yet no impression
seems to have been made on the people at large. It
was not the first time that Wilfrid had encountered
them, for on his return from his consecration in Gaul
the ship in which he was crossing the Channel had
been driven upon their shores, and the wild wreckers
had rushed to plunder it with threats of death to the
crew if they resisted them. A priest, who standing
on a high mound strove by incantations to " bind the
hands " of the sailors, was struck dead by a stone flung
from the ship, and so wild was the rage of the people
at his fall that it was only after a fierce conflict that
the rise of the tide, floating the vessel again, enabled
Wilfrid and his men to escape to Sandwich.[3] Their
wild barbarism was shown yet more in the famine
which was ravaging the country when Wilfrid now
reached it. Rather than die tamely of hunger, forty or
fifty men would mount a cliff, and joining hands fling

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[1] "Diffamaverunt ... ut pretio redempta essent scripta." Eddi.
c. xxxiv.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 13.   [3] Eddi. c. xiii.

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themselves together into the sea.[1] They seem not even to have possessed the knowledge of fishing, and it was partly by the skill with which he used this means of allaying their wants that Wilfrid succeeded in bringing them over to Christianity. Those who refused had to submit to their king's command;[2] and it was in the midst of this new flock that Wilfrid remained for some five years in unaccustomed quiet on the land which Ædilwalch granted to him at Selsey.

Meanwhile Theodore completed his work in the *Completion* north by the creation of two fresh bishoprics, one of *of* them at Lindisfarne, and the other at Abercorn on the *Theodore's* southern shore of the Firth of Forth to include the *work.* province of the Picts. The three years' delay before this final step in 682[3] was probably due to a war that sprang up between Mercia and Northumbria in the year that followed the opening of the Primate's work in the north. The country of the Lindiswaras still remained a subject of contention between the two kingdoms. It was assailed in 679 even by the peaceful Æthelred, and the armies of the two kings met in a bloody contest on the banks of the Trent.[4] The strife was brought to an end by the intervention of Theodore, and the position which the Archbishop had attained was shown by the acceptance on the part of both states of a treaty of peace which he drew up, and

[1] Bæda, H. E. iv. 13.
[2] Eddi. c. xli. "Quidam voluntarie, alii vero coacti regis imperio, idolatriam deserentes."
[3] Bæda, H. E. iv. 12.
[4] Bæda, H. E. iv. 21.

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by the consent of Northumbria to an abandon-
ment of its supremacy over the Lindiswaras.[1]   Such
a consent however shows that Ecgfrith's power was
now fatally shaken.   The old troubles revived on his
northern frontier, where the Scots of Argyle would
seem to have received aid in some rising from the men
of their blood across the Irish Channel, for in 684 the
Northumbrian fleet swept the Irish shores [2] in a raid
which seemed like sacrilege to those who loved the
home of Aidan and Columba ; and where in 685 a
rising of the Picts forced Ecgfrith's army again to
cross the Firth of Forth.

Nectansmere.   A sense of coming ill weighed on Northumbria, and
its dread was quickened by a memory of the curses
which had been pronounced by the Irish bishops on
the king in vengeance for the ravages of his fleet.
Nowhere was this sense of coming ill more vivid than
in the mind of Cuthbert.   Cuthbert had remained at
Lindisfarne through a great secession which followed
on the Synod of Whitby,[3] and become prior of the
dwindled company of brethren,[4] now torn with endless
disputes, against which his patience and good-humour
struggled in vain.   Worn out at last he fled to a
little island of basaltic rock, one of a group not far
from Ida's fortress of Bamborough, strewn for the
most part with kelp and seaweed, the home of the
gull and the seal.[5]   In the midst of it rose his hut of

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 12.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26.

[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 26.

[4] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert, c. xvi.

[5] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert, c. xvii. *et seq.*

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rough stones and turf, dug deep into the rock and roofed with logs and straw. It was the growing reverence for his sanctity that dragged Cuthbert back, after years of this seclusion, to fill the vacant see of Lindisfarne.[1] He entered Carlisle, which the King had bestowed upon his bishopric, at a moment when all were waiting for news of Ecgfrith's campaign; and as he bent over a Roman fountain which still stood unharmed amongst the ruins of Carlisle, the anxious bystanders thought they caught words of ill-omen falling from the old man's lips. "Perhaps," Cuthbert seemed to murmur, "at this very hour the peril of the fight is over and done." "Watch and pray," he said, when they questioned him on the morrow; "watch and pray." In a few days more a solitary fugitive, escaped from the slaughter, told that the Picts under Bruidi, their King, had turned desperately to bay as the English army entered Fife; and that Ecgfrith and the flower of his nobles lay, a ghastly ring of corpses, on the far-off moorland of Nectansmere.[2]

Theodore's death.

Terrible as was the blow to Northumbria, it removed the last difficulty in Theodore's path. He was now drawing near the close of his life, and anxious ere he died to secure his work of organization by the reconciliation of the one prelate who still opposed it. Wilfrid, too, was backed by Rome, and to set at nought the judgment of Rome must have seemed to the primate a practical undoing of his earlier efforts

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 28.

[2] Bæda, Life of Cuthbert (Op. Min. Stevenson), c. 27. Sim. Dur. Hist. Dun. Ecc. (Twysden, Dec. Script.), i. c. 9.

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to bring about the submission of Britain to the papal
see.   The personal hostility of Ecgfrith had hitherto
stood in the way of any measures of conciliation ; but
on his fall at Nectansmere Theodore at once summoned
Wilfrid to a conference at London, and a compromise
was arranged between the two prelates.   By the inter-
cession of the primate with the new Northumbrian king
Alchfrid,[1] Wilfrid was restored to the see of York ;
but the work of Theodore in the north was left intact,
for the see to which Wilfrid returned was simply that
of the Deira,[2] while the Bernician sees of Lindisfarne
and Hexham remained in the hands of their former
occupants.[3]   The submission of Wilfrid was the last
success of Theodore in his plan of organization ;
it was soon followed indeed by the primate's death
in 690.   His work, as we have seen, had been simply
an organization of the episcopate, for with the station
or revenues of the lower clergy the Archbishop does
not seen to have dealt.   But when once the broad
outlines of this organization had been laid down in
his arrangement of dioceses, the internal development
of the English Church followed the general mode of
other churches.   The settlement of the episcopate
was succeeded during the next hundred years by the
development of a parish system.   The loose system
of the mission-station, the monastery from which
priest and bishop went forth on journey after journey
to preach and baptize, as Aidan went forth from
Lindisfarne or Cuthbert from Melrose, naturally

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[1] Bæda, H. E. v. 19.
[2] See Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," vol. iii. p. 171, note
[3] Eddi. c. xliii. xliv.

disappeared as the land became Christian. The missionaries became settled clergy. The township or group of townships which fell within the holding or patronage of an English noble or landowner became the parish, and its chaplain its parish priest, as the King's chaplain had become the bishop, and the kingdom his diocese. A settled revenue and a fixed code of law were the other pressing needs of the ecclesiastical order ; and at the close of the eighth century a source of permanent endowment for the clergy was found in the revival of the Jewish payment of tithes, and in the annual gift to Church purposes of a tenth of the produce of the soil ; while discipline within the Church itself was provided for by an elaborate code of sin and penance[1] in which the principle of compensation which lay at the root of Teutonic legislation crept into the relations between God and the soul.

[1] The first English penitential is that of Theodore, which may be found in Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii. p. 173, &c.

Political disunion of Britain. FOR the next hundred years, from the death of Theodore to the accession of Ecgberht, the Church which the primate had moulded into shape exercised an ever deepening influence on English feeling. In spite of the continuance of political disunion, the drift towards a national unity grew more and more irresistible. If England could not find a national life in the supremacy of any of its states, it found such a life in the Church; and while the energies of its secular powers were wasted in jealousy or strife, the weight of the Church which embraced them all became steadily greater. But throughout the whole of this period it was the Church alone which expressed this national consciousness. Politically, the hope of a national union grew fainter with every year; and at the moment of Theodore's death such a hope seemed almost at an end. Northumbria had definitely sheered off into provincial isolation, and the event which marked the close of Theodore's primacy, the revival of the West-Saxons, completed that parting of the

land between three states of nearly equal power out
of which it seemed impossible that unity could
come.

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The
West-
Saxons.

Since their overthrow at Faddiley, a hundred years
before, the West-Saxons had been weakened by
anarchy and civil war. So terribly had their strength
been broken that even the Britons had in turn assailed
them, while both of the rival English powers had
attacked and defeated them. Eadwine had routed
them with a great slaughter. Penda had not only
routed them, but taken from them their lands along
the lower Severn. Wulfhere had carried on the
struggle with the same success : he had torn from
them the supremacy over Essex and London, which
they had won after the wreck of Æthelberht's over-
lordship, and then pushing across the Thames had
mastered the West-Saxon district of Surrey to the
south of it. But in spite of these losses the real
strength of the Gewissas had been in no ways lessened.
Their defeats had been simply owing to their in-
ternal divisions, and these divisions never broke
that oneness which was the special characteristic
of their national life. Mercia had been made by
the fusion of many different states, and even North-
umbria had been created by the forced union of
two warring peoples. But Wessex had grown into
being through the simple extension over its surface
of one West-Saxon people ; and when divisions
rent it asunder, they were divisions, not in the
body of the people itself, but simply in its kingly
house. Each fragment of Welsh ground, as it
was won, seems to have been made into an under

kingdom for some one of the royal kin; and it was the continual struggle of these under-kings against the ruler whom they owned as the head king of the race, a struggle begotten no doubt from the yet more fatal contest of the houses of Ceawlin and Cutha for the head kingship itself, which distracted the energies of the West-Saxons.[1]

Revival of Wessex.

But whenever theses causes of distraction were removed, each interval of order showed that the warlike vigour of the people was as great as of old. A short restoration of tranquillity under Cenwealh sufficed, as we have seen, to give them back their superiority over the Britons, and to push their frontier to the Parret.[2]   A second interval of order in 682 strengthened King Centwine to drive the Britons as far as the Quantocks.   And at this moment a third rally of the Gewissas enabled them to turn on their assailants to the east, and again after a few years' struggle to take rank with the two rival powers of Britain.   Losses and gains indeed had strangely altered the aspect of Wessex since the days of Ceawlin.   In those days its western border stopped at Selwood and the valley of the Frome, while its future extension pointed northward from the territory it had won on the Cotswolds and the Severn valley towards the valleys of the Weaver and the Dee.   But in the years that had passed since Ceawlin's fall not only had any extension of Wessex in this direction become impossible, but she had actually lost the territory

[1] Freeman's " Ine," Part I.   Somersetshire Archæol. Proceed. vol. xviii.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 652, 658, 682.

of the Hwiccas, and her northern frontier ran along

the Avon by Bath to the upper valley of the
Thames.   The only part of central Britain which she
preserved at this time was the district of the Four
Towns, a district equivalent to our Oxfordshire and
Buckinghamshire ; while on the east she had lost
Surrey and the Isle of Wight, and had been even
forced to cede to the Mercian king the little Jutish
districts of the Meonwaras on the Southampton Water.
It seemed as if her extension could now be only to
the south-west ; and in this quarter the conquests
of Cenwealh and Centwine, carrying their frontier in
this region as far as the Quantocks, had already added
to Wessex a reach of territory whose extent and
fertility did much to compensate for the losses
elsewhere.

But the West-Saxons were far from consenting
to be permanently shut in on the east by the
border line that Wulfhere had drawn round them.
When Ceadwalla, a king of Ceawlin's line, mounted
the West-Saxon throne in 685,[1] and, after crushing
the rival under-kings of the house of Cerdic, gathered
all the Gewissas beneath his sway, the strength of his
realm was at once seen in the rapidity with which it
broke through this frontier.   In some months of fierce
fighting Ceadwalla again set up the West-Saxon supre-
macy over Sussex, and made the Isle of Wight his
own after a massacre of its inhabitants.[2]   From Sussex

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 685.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 15, 16.   If we accept Malmesbury's
statement (Gest. Pontif ; Savile, Script. post Bædam, p. 133),
Sussex lay within Æthelberht's imperium, and passed on the

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Ceadwalla pushed on to Kent; but his attempt to extend his rule over all Southern Britain met with a more luckless issue. He was himself repulsed in a first campaign; a second saw his brother Mul burned in a house which he was plundering; and in 688 Ceadwalla threw down his crown in disgust and withdrew from the land to die a pilgrim at Rome.[1] His work, however, found better fortunes in the hands of his successor Ine. After the close of a civil war which broke out on Ceadwalla's withdrawal, Ine, who, like his predecessor, was of the branch of Ceawlin, succeeded in again uniting the Gewissas under a single sway; and so vigorous were his attacks upon Kent that in 694 the realm paid the blood-fine for Mul and bowed to the West-Saxon supremacy.[2] Its submission carried Ine's rule along the whole southern coast from Dorset to Thanet; and we may believe that not only the whole land south of the Thames but also Essex passed under the West-Saxon supremacy, as we find London from this time no longer in Mercian hands, but owning Ine as its lord.[3]

wreck of it under the supremacy of the West-Saxons. In Wulfhere's day it was certainly under Mercia; but it had probably slipped away of late from Mercian rule, as it had again become heathen.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 686, 687, 688. Will. Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 46. Bæda, H. E. v. 7.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 694. Malm. Gest. Reg. i. p. 48.

[3] Ine speaks of Earconwald, the bishop of London and the East-Saxons from 675 to 693 as "my bishop," in the opening of his Laws (Thorpe, "Laws and Institutes," vol. i. p. 103). London would thus seem to have submitted before the close of the contest with Kent. In a letter dated 705, we have notice of quarrels between Ine and the East-Saxon rulers who had

How these possessions were torn from Æthelred's CHAP. VIII.
grasp we cannot tell, for under Æthelred Mercian The Three Kingdoms.
history is all but a blank, and there is nothing to show 690-829.
whether Ine owed his successes to the sword or to some
civil strife which distracted the Mercian realm.[1] In 704, *Conquests from Dyvnaint.*
after a reign of nearly thirty years, Æthelred withdrew
to a monastery : and his nephew Coenred, the son of
Wulfhere, succeeded him on the Mercian throne.[2] The
conflict with Wessex was still, however, deferred : for
Ine, content with his gains south of Thames, turned to
a new field of conquest on his border in the west.
Here he took up the work of Cenwealh and Centwine
by marching in 710 on the British King Geraint.[3]
Shrunken as it was from its old area, the realm of
Dyvnaint still stretched from the Quantocks to the
Land's End, and its king seems to have exercised
some supremacy across the Bristol Channel over the
princes of the opposite coast.[4] The extent of Geraint's
dominions made him the first among the British
princes of his day. Even the English regarded him
as a powerful ruler, and Ealdhelm addressed him as
" the glorious lord of the western realm." [5] But

entertained exiles from Wessex. Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils,"
vol. iii. p. 274.

[1] In 697 Æthelred's wife, Osthryth, was put to death by
the " primates " of Southumbria. Eng. Chron. a. 697. Bæda,
H. E. lib. v. c. 24. After this he seems to have made over
Southumbria to Wulfhere's son, Coenred, to whom he gave up
the throne in 704, retiring to the monastery of Bardney.

[2] Bæda, H. E. v. 19. 24.   [3] Eng. Chron. a. 710.

[4] See Freeman's " Ine," Somerset. Archæol. Proceedings, vol.
xviii.

[5] " Domino gloriosissimo occidentalis regni sceptra guber-
nanti." Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," vol. iii. p. 268.

he was unable to meet the shock of Ine's attack, and a hard-fought battle gave the West-Saxons a fertile territory along the Tone with the districts of Crewkerne and Ilminster. On the border of the newly-won territory, where a spur of the Black-downs runs out towards the ridge of the Quantocks, the great flat of which this part of Somersetshire consists

SOUTH WESTERN BRITAIN

Roman names   GLEAVUM
English   „   DEORHAM
Modern   „   Amesbury

English Miles.
0 5 10   20   30   40

Stanford's Geographical Estabᵗ
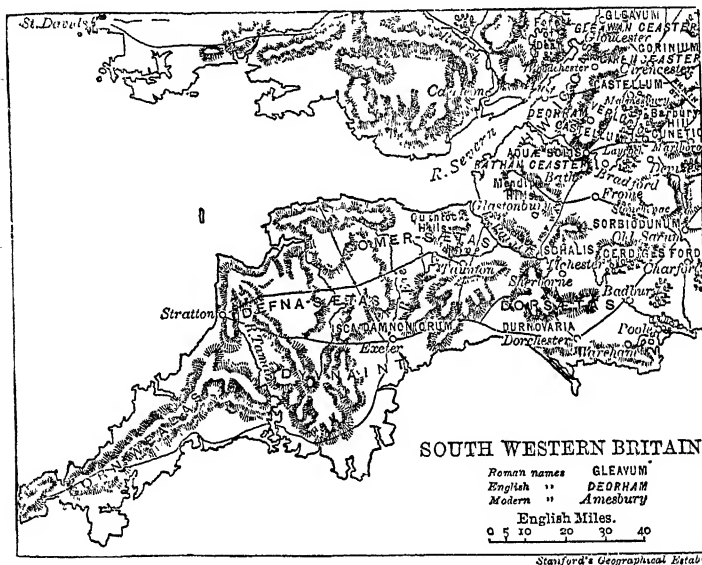
narrows into a mere neck of land; and in the midst of this neck, on the banks of a little stream which wandered through it to the marshes of the Parrett, Ine set up a fortress that served as an admirable military position for the defence of his newly-con-quered territory, or as a starting-point for a new advance on Dyvnaint. The fortress grew into a town,

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Somerset.

and our Taunton, or Town on the Tone, still, even as
a linguistic border-land, preserves the memory of this
advance of Ine.[1]

The tract of country, which had passed, with the
successive conquests of Cenwealh, Centwine, and Ine,
into the hands of the West-Saxons, is that which took
the name of the land of the Somersætas, or our
Somerset. Few districts better illustrate the physical
and social revolution which was wrought by the
English conquerors. Under the Romans it had shared
in the wealth and prosperity which characterized the
country north of the Avon. One of its towns, Bath,
stood on an equal footing with Glevum and Corinium
in the strife with the invaders; and the district
around its second town, Ilchester, was thickly studded
with the villas of rich provincials, whose wealth was
probably derived from the lead mines which had been
worked even in British days along the crest of
Mendip. In the chaos of native rule this wealth and
order had long passed away; but the raids of the
West-Saxons must have completed its ruin. The
towns were left desolate as elsewhere. Bath, indeed,
which had fallen into English hands as early as
Ceawlin's day and was now detached from this region
as a part of Mercia, already saw a new life rising up
round the monastery which had been founded among
its ruins; but the peasant long told amidst the wreck

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[1] Eng. Chron. a. 722. "Tanton that Ine formerly built." Mr.
Elworthy, in his Introduction to the "Dialect of West Somerset,"
says: "The people of the little village of Ruishton, only a mile and
a half to the east of Taunton, speak the eastern dialect; while at
Bishop's Hull, one mile to the west, they speak the western."

of Ilchester a legend of its fall.   Bristol was not as
yet, and only villages and hamlets broke the space
between Bath and Exeter ; while the country houses
of the provincial landowners lay burned or in ruin,
and the mines from which their wealth had been
drawn were abandoned or forgotten.   Above all, the
industrial works which the Romans had constructed
for the drainage of the marshes that stretched into
the very heart of the country fell unheeded into
decay ; the sea burst again through the neglected
barriers at the mouth of the Parrett and the Brue ;
and the height which is known as the Tor rose like
an island out of a waste of flood-drowned fen that
stretched westward to the Channel.

Ine's rule.   From one of the English families who chose it as
their settlement a little hamlet at the base of the
Tor took its name of Glastonbury, the burh of the
Glæstings.[1]   The spot, however, was already famous
as a religious shrine of the Britons.   It had long been
a place of pilgrimage, for the tradition that a second
Patrick rested there drew to it the wandering scholars
of Ireland ;[2] and the new relation of Englishmen
and Welshmen was shown in the reverence which Ine
paid to this British shrine.   The monastery became
an English one, richly endowed by the King ;[3] and
beside its "ancient church, built by no art of man,"
a rude log-building left by its Welsh owners, and

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[1] Kemble, Sax. in Engl. i. 465.

[2] "Anon. Life of Dunstan."   Stubbs's Memorials of Dunstan,
p. 10.

[3] For his grant see Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii.
p. 306.

carefully preserved by the English comers, Ine founded his own abbey-church of stone.[1] The same mingling of the two races is seen in another conquest of this time. Side by side with their progress across Somer-setshire, the West-Saxons must have been pushing their way through the woodlands of Dorset; and even before Ine's conquests reached the Tone, an advance in this quarter from the south seems to have given them Exeter. By an arrangement which marks the new temper of the conquerors, Exeter became a double city.[2] Its southern half was hence-forth English; its northern—as is still marked by the Celtic names of the saints to whom its churches in this quarter are dedicated—remained in the hands of the Britons. The laws of Ine[3] which still remain to us show him as providing for the administrative needs of the mixed population which dwelt in the district that had been added to the West-Saxon realm; and it was perhaps the same mixed character of its inhabitants which induced him to carry out Theodore's scheme of division in his own kingdom,[4] and while leaving Daniel at Winchester as bishop of the older Wessex, that is to say, our Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey, and the bulk of Wiltshire, to group the whole country west of

[1] For the successive churches of Glastonbury see Freeman, " Ine," part ii. Somerset. Archæol. Proceed. vol. xx.

[2] Kerslake, paper on " Exeter " (Archæol. Journal, vol. xxx. p. 214 *et seq.*). Will. Malm. Gest. Reg. vol. i. p. 214, says of Æthelstan, " Illos (Cornewallenses) quoque impigre adorsus, ab Excestrâ quam ad id temporis æquo cum Anglis jure inhabitarant, cedere compulit."

[3] Thorpe, " Anc. Laws and Institutes," vol. i. pp. 119, 123, 139.

[4] Bæda, H. E. v. 18.

CHAP. VIII.

The Three
Kingdoms.

690-
829.

Ine and
Mercia.
Selwood and the Frome valley as a new bishopric
for his kinsman Ealdhelm.[1]

From this organization of his British conquests,
however, Ine was called away by an attack on his
northern frontier. Mercia had never forgiven the
loss of her dominion across the Thames, and the new
strength which Wessex drew from her conquests in
Somerset would only spur the Midland Kingdom to a
decisive struggle for the supremacy of the South. In
715 Ceolred, the son of Æthelred, who six years before
had succeeded Coenred on the Mercian throne, again
took up the strife. He must have marched into the
very heart of Wessex,[2] for Ine met the foe at
Wanborough, on the chalk-heights above the Vale of
White Horse, where his ancestor Ceawlin had suffered
his crowning defeat a century before. The battle
was a long and bloody one ; but the absence of all
account of its issue shows that Ceolred's attack
failed, and that the hope of subjecting the West-
Saxons to a Mercian sway was for the while at an
end. The victory of Ine indeed seemed to raise
Wessex again to a front rank among the powers
of Britain. But in the hour of his glory the king

[1] It was in this way that the diocese of Ealdhelm came to
include that portion of the present Wiltshire about Malmesbury
and Bradford which represents the forest tract which Cenwealh
had won, as well as Dorset and Somersetshire. Although the
West-Saxon shires are of older formation than those of middle
England, and no doubt mainly represent the tribal settlements
of distinct West-Saxon peoples, yet I think this diocesan
division shows that the formation of Wiltshire with its actual
boundaries is later in date than this division of the dioceses at
the beginning of the eighth century.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 715.

had again to face the civil strife which was the curse
of Wessex; for after thirty-three years of a glorious
reign the old anarchy broke out in revolts of Æthel-
ings sprung like himself from the blood of Cerdic but
sprung from the rival line of Ceol. Ine indeed held
his own. One rebel, Cynewulf, was slain; another
Ealdberht, was driven to take refuge among the South-
Saxons.[1] But the strife went on; and a wild legend
tells the story of the disgust which at last drove
Ine from the throne. He had feasted royally at one
of his country houses, and as he rode from it on the
morrow his queen bade him turn back thither. The
King returned to find his house stripped of curtains
and vessels, and foul with refuse and the dung of
cattle, while in the royal bed where he had slept with
Æthelburh rested a sow with her farrow of pigs. The
scene had no need of the Queen's comment :—" See,
my lord, how the fashion of this world passeth
away ! "[2] In 726 Ine laid down his troubled crown,
and like his predecessor Ceadwalla sought peace and
death in a pilgrimage to Rome.[3]

The withdrawal of Ine and the anarchy of Wessex *Æthelbald*
roused anew the hopes of its rival in Mid-Britain. *of Mercia.*
In 718, a year after his defeat by Ine at Wanborough,
the Mercian ruler Ceolred fell frenzy-smitten at his
board,[4] and his realm passed into the hands of the
most vigorous of its kings. Among those who

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 721, 725.
[2] Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy) vol. i. p. 49.
[3] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 7.
[6] Eng. Chron. a. 716. Letter of Boniface to Æthelbald.
Stubbs and Haddan, " Councils," iii. 355.

sought Guthlac's retirement at Crowland was Æthel-
bald, a son of Penda's brother Alweo, flying from
Ceolred's hate.   Driven off again and again by the
King's pursuit, Æthelbald still returned to the little
hut he had built beside the hermitage, and comforted
himself in hours of despair with his companion's
words.   "Know how to wait," said Guthlac, "and
the kingdom will come to thee ; not by violence or
rapine, but by the hand of God."   On Ceolred's death
indeed his people chose Æthelbald, who was already
famous for his great strength and bravery, for their
king.[1]   Æthelbald took up again with better fortunes
the enterprise in which his predecessor had been
foiled—his struggle for the supremacy of the south.
During the first ten years of his reign indeed he
shrank from a conflict with the victor of Wan-
borough ; but in the anarchy that broke out on
Ine's withdrawal [2] Wessex lay helpless before him ;
and in the struggle that followed Æthelbald overran
the whole of the West-Saxon country, till his siege
and capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733
seemed to end the war.[3]   For twenty years the
overlordship of Mercia was recognized by all Britain
south of the Humber.   It was at the head of the
forces, not of Mercia only, but of East-Anglia and
Kent, as well as of the West-Saxons,[4] that Æthel-
bald marched against the Welsh on his western
frontier ; and he styled himself " King not of the

[1] Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 111 ; Eng. Chron. a..716.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 728.
[3] Eng. Chron. a. 733.
[4] Huntingdon, Hist. Angl. (Arnold), pp. 119, 121.

BRITAIN IN 750.

Scale of Miles.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

Strathclyde

NORTHUMBRIA

ETHELBALD'S

North Welsh

Mercians

Middle Engle

Lindiswara

Gyrwas

East Engle

WYRE

ARDEN

Hecana

DEAN

Hwiccan

Saxons

SUPREMACY

East Saxons

Middle Sexe

Surrey

ANDREDSWEALD

Kent

Sussex

Dynaint West Wales

Wes

SELWOOD

Stanford's Geographl Estabt

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Mercians only, but of all the neighbouring peoples who are called by the common name of Southern English." [1]   He had indeed to meet constant outbreaks of revolt among his new subjects.   But for twelve years he seems to have met them with success ; and it was not till 754 that a general rising forced him to call his whole strength to the field. At the head of his own Mercians and of the subject hosts of Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, Æthelbald marched to the field of Burford, where the West-Saxons were again marshalled under the golden dragon of their race.   But the numbers of his host could not avert his doom.   After hours of desperate fighting in the forefront of the battle, a sudden panic seized the Mercian king, and the supremacy of Mid-Britain passed for ever away, as he fled first of his army from the field. [2]

Northumbria at peace.

While the two powers of Southern Britain were wasting their energies in this desperate struggle, Northumbria remained apart in a peace which was only broken by occasional troubles on her northern border and by the beginnings of that anarchy which at a later time was to wreck her greatness.   The fall of Ecgfrith in 685 had shaken indeed the fabric of the realm ; for the triumphant Picts pressed in upon it from the north, and drove Bishop Trumwine

[1] Charter in Palgrave, " English Commonwealth," vol. ii. p. 218.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 752. (From the death of Bæda, in 735, to the reign of Æthelwulf, the entries of the English Chronicle are wrong by two years. See Stubbs's edition of Hoveden, preface to Vol. I. p. lxxxix. *et seq.*)   Huntingdon, Hist. Ang. (Arnold), p. 121.

from Abercorn,[1] while their success woke the Britons to fresh revolt. Aldfrith, however, a brother of Ecgfrith, who was called from a refuge at Hii to the Northumbrian throne,[2] showed himself in this hour of need worthy of the blood from which he sprang by reasserting his mastery over the men of Cumbria and Galloway, and exchanging the claim of lordship over the Picts for a profitable alliance with them. Even in the north, however, his work was limited within the bounds of self-defence; and a consciousness of weakness is seen in the change which passes over the policy of his realm. All effort at conquest was for a while abandoned; and the state which had won England by its sword from heathendom, and given her by its victories the first notion of a national unity, turned to bestow on her the more peaceful gifts of art, letters, and a new poetry. The twenty years of Aldfrith's rule were years of peace and order, in which the literary and artistic impulse which had been given to Northumbria alike by the Celtic and Roman churches produced striking results. Letters above all sprang vigorously to the front. The books which Benedict brought from Rome in visit after visit[3] quickened the intellectual temper of the country; and it is not too much to say that under Aldfrith, himself a man of learning and study,[4] Northumbria became the literary centre of Western Europe.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26 ; Life of Cuthbert, c. xxiv.
[3] Bæda, Vit. Abbat. (ed. Hussey), pp. 320, 323.
[4] See his purchase of a Cosmography from Abbot Ceolfrid. Bæda, Vit. Abbat. (ed. Hussey), p. 327.

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The Three
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Bæda.

The first form the new learning took was naturally a biographical one ; at the close of Aldfrith's reign, indeed, a school of biography was already in full vigour, remnants of whose work remain to us in the anonymous " Life of Cuthbert " and in the " Life of Wilfrid," by Æddi.[1] But this biographical out-pouring soon lost itself in a larger literary current, and through the troubled reigns of Aldfrith's three successors, Osred, Coenred, and Osric,[2] as well as the more peaceful reign of their successor, the scholarly Ceolwulf, the learning of the age seemed to be summed up in a Northumbrian scholar.

Bæda—the Venerable Bede, as later times styled him—was born in 673, nine years after the Synod of Whitby, on ground which passed a year later to Benedict Biscop as the site of the great abbey which he reared by the mouth of the Wear.[3] His youth was trained and his long tranquil life was wholly spent at Jarrow, in an offshoot of Benedict's house which was founded by his friend Ceolfrid. Bæda tells us in his own charming way a story of his boyhood there ; how one of the great plagues which followed the Synod of Whitby swept off every monk who knew how to sing in choir save the abbot and this little scholar of his ; and how the two stoutly kept up the service, and dropping only the antiphons, struggled through the psalms

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[1] The "Life of Cuthbert" was the earlier of the two works ; that of Wilfrid may be dated about 709.

[2] Osred, who was a mere boy, reigned eleven years, from 705—716 ; Coenred two years, 716—718 ; Osric eleven, from 718—729 ; Ceolwulf eight years, from 729—737.

[3] Bæda, H. E. v. 24 ; Vit. Abbat. (Hussey's Bæda), p. 318.

amidst much weeping and sobbing till the rest of the
brethren were sufficiently instructed in the church-
chant to suffer the full service to be restored.[1] Bæda
never stirred from Jarrow. " I spent my whole life in
the same monastery," he says, " and while attentive to
the rule of my order and the service of the Church
my constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or
writing." [2]   The words sketch for us a scholar's life,
the more touching in its simplicity that it is the life of
the first great English scholar.   The quiet grandeur
of a life consecrated to knowledge, the tranquil
pleasure that lies in learning and teaching and writing
dawned in fact for Englishmen in the story of Bæda.
While still young he became teacher ; and six hundred
monks, besides strangers that flocked thither for
instruction, formed his school of Jarrow.[3]   It is hard
to imagine how, among the toils of the schoolmaster
and the duties of the monk, Bæda could have found
time for the composition of the numerous works that
made his name famous in the West.   But materials
for study had accumulated in Northumbria through
the journeys of Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop and
the libraries which were forming at Wearmouth and
York.   The tradition of the older Irish teachers still
lingered to direct the young scholar into that path of
Scriptural interpretation to which he chiefly owed his
fame. Greek, a rare accomplishment in the West, came
to him from the school which the Greek Archbishop

[1] Anon. Hist. Abbat. in Opera Minora Bædæ (Stevenson),
sec. 14.   [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 24.
[3] Bæda, Vit. Abbat. 328.   Note on Greek MS. found in
England by Æneas Sylvius.   Creighton's History.

Theodore founded beneath the walls of Canterbury;
while his skill in the ecclesiastical chant was derived
from a Roman cantor whom Pope Vitalian sent in the
train of Benedict Biscop. Little by little the young
scholar made himself master of the whole range of
the science of his time : he became, as Burke rightly
styled him, "the father of English learning." [1]
The tradition of the older classic culture was re-
vived for England in his quotations of Plato and
Aristotle, of Seneca and Cicero, of Lucretius and
Ovid. Virgil cast over him the spell that he cast
over Dante ; verses from the Æneid break his narra-
tives of martyrdoms, and the disciple ventures on
the track of the great master in a little eclogue
descriptive of the approach of spring.

*His
work.*
His work was done with small aid from others.
"I am my own secretary," he writes. "I make
my own notes. I am my own librarian." But
forty-five works remained after his death to attest
his prodigious industry. In his own eyes and those
of his contemporaries the most important among
these were the commentaries and homilies upon
various books of the Bible which he had drawn
from the writings of the Fathers. But he was far

[1] As a writer among Englishmen Bæda had been preceded by
Aldhelm, who died in 709, as well as by the anonymous biographer
of Cuthbert (between 697 and 705). Æddi, in his biography
of Wilfrid (finished about 709), is his contemporary ; for
Bæda's earliest works seem to date from the beginning
of the eighth century (see article "Bæda," by Stubbs, Dict.
Christ. Biog. i. 300). The "De Sex Ætatibus" was written in
707. His other Scriptural, chronological, and biographical works
preceded the Ecclesiastical History, which was ended in 731.

from confining himself to theology. In treatises compiled as text-books for his scholars Bæda threw together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy and meteorology, in physics and music, in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, medicine. But the encyclopædic character of his researches left him in heart a simple Englishman. He loved his own English tongue ; he was skilled in English song ; his last work was a translation into English of the Gospel of St. John, and almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rimes upon death. But the noblest proof of his love of English lies in the work which immortalizes his name. In his " Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," which he began just before the death of Aldfrith, in 704, Bæda became the first English historian. His work stretches over nearly a century and a half, from the landing of Augustine in 597 to the year 731 in which the old man laid down his pen. A prefatory opening, compiled from older writers, from legends and martyrologies, sums up the story of Britain under the Romans and its conquest by the English ; but it is with the landing of the Roman missionaries that the work really begins. There is little need for Bæda's modest excuse. " If in what I have written, any one find matters other than what is true, let him not blame me for cleaving to what is the true rule of historic narrative and simply gathering from common fame the facts I have resolved to record for the instruction of after-times." [1] What

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[1] Preface to his " Ecclesiastical History."

is really marvellous is the pains which he took in col-
lecting and sifting his information.   Where he found
friends as zealous as Albinus and Nothelm at Canter-
bury his story is accurate and full.   Even the Papal
archives gave up the letters of Archbishops Laurentius
and Honorius to his indefatigable research.   His
work was indeed limited by the difficulty of procuring
information in the ruder states.   The history of
Northumbria, which lay within his own sphere of
observation, is told with admirable fulness and force.
Wessex, Mercia, and East Anglia fare worse, in spite
of the information which reached Bæda from Bishop
Daniel of Winchester and the monks of Lastingham ;
but fortunately they formed during most of this
period the least important part of the historic field.
The conversion of Kent, the warfare of Penda, the
fight of Northumbria for the Cross, the preaching of
Aidan, the wanderings of Cuthbert and Chad—these
were the main events which Bæda had to follow, and
on all these he is graphic and full.

*His
death.*
      What Bæda owed to no informant was his own ex-
quisite faculty of story-telling.   His story of Gregory
in the market-place remains as familiar as a household
word to English children.   The quaint anecdotes
of Cuthbert, the tender details of the love that
knit Bishop Aidan to King Oswiu are as charm-
ingly told as the story of the Sparrow which marks
the conversion of Northumbria.   But no story even
of Bæda's telling is so touching as the story of his
death.[1]   Two weeks before the Easter of 735 the old

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[1] Given by a certain Cuthbert in a letter to Cuthwine ; Sim.
Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. (Twysden), i. c. 15.

man was seized with an extreme weakness and loss of
breath. He still preserved, however, his usual plea-
santness and good humour, and in spite of prolonged
sleeplessness continued his lectures to the pupils
about him. Verses of his own English tongue broke
from time to time from the master's lip—rude rimes
that told how before the "need-fare," Death's stern
"must-go," none can enough bethink him what is to
be his doom for good or ill. The tears of Bæda's
scholars mingled with his song. "We never read
without weeping," writes one of them. So the days
rolled on to Ascension-tide, and still master and
pupils toiled at their work, for Bæda longed to bring
to an end his version of St. John's Gospel into the
English tongue and his extracts from Bishop Isidore.
"I don't want my boys to read a lie," he answered
those who would have had him rest, "or to work to
no purpose after I am gone." A few days before
Ascension-tide his sickness grew upon him, but he
spent the whole day in teaching, only saying cheer-
fully to his scholars, "Learn with what speed you
may ; I know not how long I may last." The dawn
broke on another sleepless night, and again the old
man called his scholars round him and bade them
write. "There is still a chapter wanting," said the
scribe, as the morning drew on, "and it is hard
for thee to question thyself any longer." "It is
easily done," said Bæda ; "take thy pen and write
quickly." Amid tears and farewells the day wore
on to eventide. "There is yet one sentence un-
written, dear master," said the boy. "Write it
quickly," bade the dying man. "It is finished

now," said the little scribe at last. "You speak truth," said the master; "all is finished now." Placed upon the pavement, his head supported in his scholar's arms, his face turned to the spot where he was wont to pray, Bæda chanted the solemn "Glory to God." As his voice reached the close of his song he passed quietly away.

The sons of Eata.

First among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians, it is in the monk of Jarrow that English learning strikes its roots. But the quiet tenour of his life was broken by the signs of coming disorganization in Northumbria: and though this anarchy was quelled by the scholarly Ceolwulf, to whom Bæda dedicated his history, after eight years of rule this king laid down his sword in disgust,[1] and withdrew to a monastery. His reign however had been marked by an ecclesiastical change which shows how strongly the provincial feeling of severance in the three kingdoms was struggling against the centralizing action of the Church. At the close of his life the state of things which he saw about him drew from Bæda a scheme of religious reformation, one of whose chief features was the revival of the Archbishoprick which Pope Gregory had originally designed to set up in the north;[2] and this suggestion was soon realized by the occupant of the see of York, Ecgberht, who procured from Rome his recognition as Archbishop in 735.[3] From this time, therefore, so far as Northumbria was concerned,

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[1] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 1; Twysden.

[2] Epist. ad Ecgbertum, in Hussey's Bæda, p. 332.

[3] Appendix Bædæ, a. 735, in Hussey's Bæda, p. 314.

the work of Theodore was to a great extent undone; the supremacy of the see of Canterbury found a rival across the Humber; and the political isolation of the northern kingdom was reflected in its religious independence. The close connection of the new see and the northern throne was seen three years later, in 738, when the Archbishop's brother, Eadberht, became king of the Northumbrians. The joint character of their rule was shown in the " stycas " or copper pieces which were coined in the mint at York, and which bear the legend of the king on one side and of the primate on the other.[1]

*Eadberht
and
Ecgberht.*

Never had the kingdom shown greater vigour within or without than under these two sons of Eata. Eadberht showed himself from the outset of his reign an active and successful warrior. Though attacked at the same time on his southern border by Æthelbald of Mercia, he carried on in 740 a successful war against the Picts; [2] and ten years later recovered from the Britons of Strath-Clyde the district of Kyle in Ayrshire.[3] So great was his renown that the Frank King Pippin sent envoys to Northumbria with costly gifts and offers of his friendship.[4] Meanwhile Archbishop Ecgberht had shown as restless an activity in the establishment of a school at York. We have already seen the return of life to this city in the reign of Eadwine, and though it seems to have been again forsaken by the kings of Bernician race who

[1] Article by Raine on "Ecgberht," Dict. Christ. Biog. ii. 50.
[2] Appendix Bædæ, a. 740, Hussey's Bæda, p. 314.
[3] Ibid. a. 750.
[4] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 3 ; Twysden, p. 11.

followed him, it became from Wilfrid's days the re-
ligious centre of the North, while under Eadberht,
if not before, it had become its political centre.[1]
The whole of its northern quarter and much of its
eastern had been given up to the bishop and his clergy
by Eadwine, doubtless because in its then state of aban-
donment it was a part of the folk-land, and remained
open to give ; and in the heart of it the king had reared
a little wooden chapel for Paulinus and begun a larger
church of stone.[2]   But, his fall stopped the progress
of this building, and Wilfrid in 670 found the church
almost in ruins, its windows covered with mere trellis-
work, and its roof rotted with the rain.[3]   The bishop's
energy however soon made this church a rival even
of his buildings in Ripon and Hexham, and its

[1] How completely even the main lines of communication which
ran through the older town were blotted out by the time of the
English settlement, we may see from comparing a ground-plan of
the early English streets with those of their Roman predecessors.
(For early York, see a map in Mr. Freeman's "Norman Con-
quest," vol. iv. p. 202.)   We see from this that the road from
Aldborough to the south, if it still crossed the English city in
the line of the Roman Way, diverged widely from this line to
cross the Fosse ; while the road to Malton, which crossed the
former at right angles in the heart of Eboracum, ceased to exist
in the English York, save in a fragment called Stone-gate.
Indeed the Minster with its buildings lay right across what
had been the line of it.   The bridge by which it crossed the
Ouse, and the gate by which it left the town equally disappeared.
The name of Stone-gate or street, which marks a part of this
line where the modern highway coincided with the line of the
old Roman road, would of itself suggest that elsewhere the new
lines of occupation lay, not along the paved causeways of old
Eboracum, but along unpaved lanes which wandered over its
site.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. ii. 14.   [3] Æddi, c. 16.

enlargement and decoration were actively carried on
by Ecgberht, by whose days York had become the
settled capital of the kingdom.   Ecgberht not only
established a school in connection with his church,
but supplied its educational needs by gathering the
largest library which had yet been seen in Britain, a
library in which Pliny and some at least of the works
of Aristotle, the orations of Cicero and the poems
of Virgil, Statius, and Lucan, might be seen side by
side with grammarians and scholiasts, and in which
the works of two Englishmen at least, Ealdhelm and
Bæda, mingled themselves with the long roll of Greek
and Latin Fathers.[1]

[1] The list which Alcuin gives us in his poem "De Pontifi-
cibus" (Raine's "Historians of Church of York," p. 395), is of
singular interest as the first catalogue which we have of any
English library :—

> "Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum,
>   Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,
>   Græcia vel quidquid transmisit clara Latinis,
>   Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno,
>   Africa sucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.
>   Quod pater Hieronymus, quod sensit Hilarius, atque
>   Ambrosius præsul, simul Augustinus, et ipse
>   Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius edit avitus :
>   Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo papa ;
>   Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque, coruscant,
>   Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Johannes.
>   Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda magister,
>   Quæ Victorinus scripsere Boetius atque
>   Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse
>   Acer Aristoteles, rhetor quoque Tullius ingens,
>   Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Juvencus.
>   Alcimus et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, orator,
>   Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt.

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The Three
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690-
829.

The fall
of
Northumbria.

Ecgbert was himself the leading teacher in his school, instructing its clerks or discussing literary questions with them ; and the efficiency of his teaching is shown by such a scholar as Alcuin. Scholars indeed flocked to him from every country : for it was at a moment when learning seemed to be flickering out both in Ireland and among the Franks that the School of York gathered to itself the intellectual impulse which had been given to Northumbria by Bæda, and preserved that tradition of learning and culture which was to spread again, through Alcuin, over the nations of the west. The school, indeed, long survived its founder, for the glory of the sons of Eata proved but brief. In 756 Eadberht continued his attacks on Strath-Clyde ; and allying himself with the Picts, made himself master even of its capital, Alcluyd, or Dumbarton. But at the moment when his triumph seemed complete, his army was utterly destroyed [1] as it withdrew homewards, only a few days after the city's surrender ; and so crushing was this calamity, that two years after it not only did Eadberht withdraw to a monastery and leave the throne to his son Osulf,[2] but the Archbishop

> Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus et auctor ;
> Artis grammaticæ vel quid scripsere magistri,
> Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus, Priscianusve,
> Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Comminianus.
> Invenies alias perplures, lector, ibidem.
> Egregios studiis, arte et sermone magistros,
> Plurima qui claro scripsere volumina sensu ;
> Nomina sed quorum præsenti in carmine scribi
> Longius est visum, quam plectri postulet usus."

[1] Sim. Dunelm. Gest. Reg. a. 756 ; Twysden, p. 106.
[2] Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Dun. Ecc. lib. ii. c. 3.

to the general fortunes of Western Christendom.
The change was brought about by the work of
English missionaries in the mother-country of
Englishmen. While Ælla and Cerdic were over-
running Britain, the mass of the tribes between
Friesland and the Elbe remained in their old home-
land, unchanged in religion or in institutions. Little
or no intercourse seems to have gone on between
these Saxons and their offshoot on British soil. But
the tie of kinship had never been forgotten ; and from
the moment when a storm drove Bishop Wilfrid in
677 [1] to the Frisian coast a new interest in the race
from which their blood was drawn sprang up among
Englishmen. Even in the dark hour of Nectansmere
a Northumbrian scholar was calling for mission priests
to labour " among the nations in Germany to whom
the English or Saxons who now inhabit Britain are
known to owe their blood and origin ; " [2] but nothing
had been actually done for their conversion when a
way for mission-labour was opened by the sword of
the Franks.

*The
Franks.*
The Franks had long stood first in power among
the German peoples who settled amidst the wreck of
Rome. While Jute and Engle and Saxon were creep-
ing slowly along the southern shores of Britain, their
Frankish neighbours on the Lower Rhine had swept
over Northern Gaul, over the southern kingdom of
the Visigoths, and over the Burgundian realm in the
valley of the Rhone. Nor were the Frank conquests
limited to what had been Roman ground. Eastward.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 19.
[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 9.

across the Rhine other German tribes, Alemannians,
Thuringians, and Bavarians, became their tributaries ;
and at the time when Augustine traversed Frank-
land on his way to Kent their lordship stretched
from the Pyrenees to the Scheldt and from the Bay
of Biscay to the Inn. Even at this early time there-
fore no other Teutonic state could vie either in power
or extent of rule with a realm which seemed already
more than a match for what remained of the Empire
of Rome. But it was long before the influence of the
Franks told as it might have been expected to tell on
the general politics of the West. The mass of tribes
and principalities which owned their name or bowed
beneath their sway was too loosely bound together to
exercise any definite pressure on the world without
them. For a while indeed their anarchy seemed to
undo all that their early victories had done. In the
midst of the seventh century their power over
Germany had all but gone. Though their hold re-
mained unshaken in the central districts between the
Neckar and the Main, Bavarians and Swabians had
alike thrown off their rule to the south, while north-
wards the Saxons pushed forward from the Weser to
the Rhine, and the Frisians won the lands round the
mouth of the Scheldt. But it was just at this
moment of weakness that the anarchy of the realm
came suddenly to an end and the Frankish states
drew together into a power which overawed the
world. In 687 a victory at Testri placed the
Eastern Franks of the Rhine and the Meuse at
the head of their race, and the rule of their older
royal house, the Merwings, was practically set aside

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England
and the
Franks.

for that of the leader of these Eastern Franks, Pippin
of Herstall.

The victory of Pippin changed at a blow the poli-
tical aspect of Western Christendom. Primarily it
was a rally of the Frank race against pressure from
without; and the mass of warring tribes had no
sooner drawn together than the recovery of Lower
Friesland showed their resolve to build up again the
supremacy over Germany which the Franks had in
great measure lost. But Testri was destined to have
far wider issues than the mere restoration of the
realm of Chlodowig. It was the victory of Pippin
which drew England into connexion with the fortunes
of the Franks. A friendly intercourse seems to have
gone on between the two peoples ever since their
settlement on either side of the Channel. There is
little indeed to indicate the existence of any early
political relations between them, but the bond of a
common religion drew the two countries more closely
together. Kings of East-Anglia took refuge among
the Franks from the sword of Penda.[1] Frankish
missionaries, such as Agilberct, made their way into
Britain. English children were sent to be trained in
Frank monasteries, and the daughters of Kentish
Kings' became Frankish abbesses.[2] The passion for
pilgrimages which arose at the close of the seventh
century made English travellers familiar with the
Frank kingdom as they passed through it on their
way to Rome.[3] But it was not till the victory of

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[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 18.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 23; ibid. H. E. lib. ii. c. 20.

[3] Charles to Offa. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 496-7.

Testri that the connexion of England and the Franks became in any way a political connexion. Victorious over the Frieslanders of the Scheldt, the Frankish leader was anxious to complete his victory by their conversion, and the zeal of Englishmen to win their kindred to the faith supplied him with missionaries. If Pippin did not summon the Northumbrian Willibrord and his twelve fellow preachers to his court in 690, he at any rate assured them when they appeared there of his support and protection in their mission work along the northern sea.[1]

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Willibrord fixed his bishop's seat at Utrecht, and laboured for forty years among the stubborn Frieslanders, while the sword of Pippin and his son, Charles Martel, was slowly building up again the Empire of the Franks. But the work of Willibrord was eclipsed by that of the West-Saxon Winfrith or Boniface, who crossed to the Continent in the closing years of Ine's reign, or about 718.[2] Boniface, like his

The English Missionaries.

[1] Bæda, H. E. lib. v. c. 10.

[2] The work of Boniface lies too far outside English bounds to make a part of our story. But in European history his part is a great one. His English name was Winfrith; he was born in the last quarter of the seventh century at Crediton, and brought up in a monastery in or near Exeter. He became monk at Nutsell or Netley by Winchester, a priest at thirty, and so famous for learning that he was deputed by Ine to attend a council convoked by Archbishop Berhtwald. He sailed soon after 716, with two or three monks, to Utrecht, found the Frisian King Radbod at war with Charles Martel, and looking on missionary work there as hopeless, returned home again, and with letters from Bishop Daniel visited Gregory II. at Rome, where the Pope gave him a commission to evangelize Central Europe. He returned by Lombardy, and crossing the Alps into the Duchy of Bavaria, proceeded thence to Thuringia, a country half-heathen, half-converted by

predecessor, looked for support to the Frankish Kings. "Without your aid," he owned to Charles Martel, " I could neither control the people nor defend the

Scot missionaries. Here, however, in the midst of his labours of organization and discipline he heard of the death of Radbod (719) ; and he at once started for Friesland, where for three years he assisted Willibrord : then returning to Thuringia in the wake of Charles Martel's victorious troops, he conducted a mission among Hessian heathens between the Middle Rhine and the Elbe, till 723, when he again visited Rome and Gregory. He was now made "regionary bishop," assuming the name of Bonifacius, and was bound by a stringent oath of fealty to the Pope. Starting again with commendatory letters to Charles Martel, then in a fresh tide of conquests, he gained his support, and again attacked the Hessians and felled their sacred oak at Geismar. A constant correspondence with England drew to him monks, money, and books, in plenty ; and in 731 a new Pope, Gregory III., made him Archbishop and "legate," so that he was enabled to correct refractory monks, and control chaos in Thuringia, as well as found missions and monasteries near Erfurt, Fritzlar, and Homburg in Hesse. In 738, with a great train of monks and converts, he visited Rome for the last time : returned through Bavaria, and organized the Church there by founding four sees in that Duchy. Still backed by Charles Martel's sons, especially Pippin, he wielded authority over Austrasia and Neustria, and rose into the greatest Church figure of the day. In 743 he became Archbishop of Mainz, with a diocese stretching from Cöln to Strassburg, and from Worms to Coire ; and showed his activity by founding sees at Würzburg, Erfurt, Eichstadt, and in Hesse at Buraburg, while in 744 he founded the abbey of Fulda in the great forest between Hesse and Bavaria. In 751 Pippin was made king through his means, but Boniface, from his letters, seems not to have been present at the coronation. He was in fact withdrawing from active life ; in 753 he named Lull his successor at Mainz ; and now, "infirm and decrepit in body," set out for Frisia, and was martyred there June 4. For his life, besides the passages in Bæda, we have a biography by Willibrord, and his collected letters.

priests nor prevent pagan and idolatrous rites in Germany." And the Frank aid was ungrudgingly given ; it was the threats of Charles which shielded the missionary as he levelled the heathen temples to the ground and hewed down the oak of Thunder in the sacred grove by Fritzlar. In this strange alliance of the Gospel and the sword the sword necessarily played the weightier part. Had the Germans indeed been willing to listen to mere preaching, the preaching of the English missionaries was hardly such as to win them to the faith of Christ. A Frisian King who paused on the brink of baptism to ask whither his fathers had gone who had died unchristened was told that they had gone to hell. "Whither they have gone will I go!" said Radbod, and turned back from the font. But preaching in any shape was wasted on men who saw in the missionaries only an advance guard of the Frank invaders and in the Gospel a badge of national slavery. The old religious tolerance of the German peoples disappeared. The new faith advanced and drew back with the victories or defeats of the Franks. Here and there the German axe avenged the wrongs of German freedom as of the German gods, and at the moment when his own Wessex was finally shaking off the Mercian supremacy, Boniface himself fell beneath the sword of heathen Frieslanders. By this time, however, the work of the missionaries was done. From the banks of the Danube to the mouth of the Rhine all Germany, save the stubborn Saxon land, bowed, if but in name, to the faith of Christ.

But the conversion of Germany by the English mis-sionaries was more than a victory for the Franks or

for Christianity, it was a victory for Rome. England owed its faith to the Papacy, and it was to Rome that its missionaries looked as the religious centre of Christendom. If they drew their temporal power from the Frankish sword, they sought spiritual authority from the hands of the Roman Bishop. It was to Rome that Willibrord wandered for ordination as Bishop of the Frieslanders; it was from Rome that Boniface sought his commission to preach in central and southern Germany. In visit after visit to the shrine of the Apostles the missionaries bound the German Church firmly to the obedience of the see of St. Peter. Their action was a turning-point in the history of the Papacy; for it was to the immense accession of power which their work gave it that the spiritual monarchy of Rome over the West was mainly due. But it was a turning-point also in the history of the Franks. The submission to her spiritual sway of the peoples whom their sword had won first brought Rome and the Franks together, and the union of the two powers was soon drawn closer by mutual needs. Rome saw in the Franks the one state which could save her from the ambition of the Lombards and the pressure of the Eastern Emperor. The house of Pippin on the other hand saw in Rome the one source of religious authority which could give a sacred sanction to their rule; and in the years that followed Ine's withdrawal from the throne the alliance between the Franks and the Papacy took a formal shape. In 751 the voice of Rome pronounced that the honours of sovereignty over the Frankish peoples should fall to the actual

holder of power. The Merwing Hilderick was formally deposed, and Pippin the Short, the son of Charles Martel, was anointed King of the Franks with the assent of Boniface as legate of the Papal see. A few years later, Pippin repaid his debt to Rome by crossing the Alps and by delivering the Papacy from the pressure of the Lombards.

In bringing about this union between Rome and the Franks the English missionaries had given their after-shape to the fortunes of modern Europe. The greatness of the Papacy in the middle ages sprang from the recognition of its authority by the German Church which Boniface and Willibrord built up. In saving Rome from the Lombards Pippin and his son Charles the Great brought about a revival of the Empire in the west. A common interest begat at a single moment the two mighty powers which were to part mediæval Christendom between them, and from whose strife was to spring the faiths and the nations of modern Europe. As yet, however, these mighty issues were unseen ; and England knew only of the connexion between Pippin and the English preachers in the intercourse between Britain and the Frankish Court which this connexion brought about. Its fortunes indeed at this moment offered a strange contrast to those of the country across the Channel. While the Franks were drawing together into a vast and concentrated power, the work of national consolidation among the English seemed to be fatally arrested. The battle of Burford had finally settled the division of Britain into three equal powers. Wessex was now as firmly planted south of the

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*Wars
with Kent
and
Wessex.*

Thames as Northumbria north of the Humber; and
the Midland kingdom could henceforth hope for no extension beyond either of these rivers. At the moment
indeed of its great defeat it could hardly hope to
retain its supremacy even over this territory. Not
only had Wessex been freed by the battle of Burford,
but Æthelbald's own throne seems to have been
shaken; for in 757 the Mercian king was surprised
and slain in a night attack by his ealdormen,[1] and
a year of confusion passed ere his kinsman Offa could
avenge him on his murderers and succeed to the
realm. But in the anarchy Mercia had shrunk into
narrower bounds. Kent, Essex, and East-Anglia had
thrown off her yoke, while the Welshmen were rallying
to fresh inroads over her western border.

None of the Mercian losses had been so grievous as
the loss of Kent. Through Kent ran the mainroad of
communication with the Continent; it was from the
ports of Kent that English merchants set sail across the
Channel: and the Kentish port-dues formed a welcome
addition to the Mercian revenue. Kent, too, was the
seat of an archbishoprick whose obedience was owned
by the whole English Church south of the Humber,
and whose political weight was making itself more
strongly felt every day. Yet years had to pass before
Offa could set about the recovery of this province,
and it was only after a struggle of three years that
a victory at Otford[2] in 775 gave it back to the
Mercian realm. With Kent the king doubtless again
recovered Essex and London, within whose walls, in
a quarter which was doubtless then still uninhabited,

[1] Appendix Bædæ, a. 757.   [2] Eng. Chron. a. 773 (5).

he built according to the tradition of the city a royal
vill whose site is now marked by a church of St.
Alban's. The re-conquest of these dependencies in
the south-east may have spurred Offa to a fresh
encounter with the West-Saxons, and four years later,
in 779, he marched upon the fragment of their king-
dom which remained to the north of the Thames,
the district of the Four Towns, and of the modern
shires of Oxford and Buckingham. The two armies
met in a hard-fought encounter at Bensington,[1] and
the capture of the town as well as the eventual
possession of the disputed district show that the
victory remained with Offa.

The success was a great one, for, as the locality of
their battles shows, it was this district above all that
had formed the subject of contention between Mercia
and the West-Saxons ; while its conquest gave the Mid-
land kingdom a strong southern frontier in the course
of the Thames. But how balanced was the struggle
is clear from the fact that it brought Offa's efforts to
build up again the supremacy of his predecessor to an
end, and that for the nine years that followed Mercia
made no further efforts to extend her power over
her English neighbours. Like her rivals, she turned
upon the Welsh.[2] Pushing after 779 over the Severn,
whose upper course had served till now as the border-
line between Briton and Englishman, Offa drove the

*Conquests
over the
Welsh.*

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 777 (9).

[2] "Annales Cambriæ" (Rolls edit.), a. 778-784. The story of
the dyke is not found before Asser (Asser, ed. Wise, p. 10) ; and
the dyke itself is certainly in parts a natural feature and not
artificial. But the later tradition is probably right in taking
it as a bound of their conquest.

King of Powys from his capital, Pengwyrn, whose older name its conquerors replaced by the significant designation of the Town in the Scrub, Scrobsbyryg, or Shrewsbury, and carried the Mercian border to the Wye. The border-line he drew after his inroad is marked by a huge earth-work which runs from the mouth of the Wye to that of the Dee, and which still bears the name of Offa's Dyke. A settlement of Englishmen on the land between this dyke and the Severn served as a military frontier for the Mercian realm. Here, as in the later conquests of the North-umbrians and the West-Saxons, the older plan of clearing the conquered from the soil was abandoned. The Welshmen no longer withdrew from the land which the English won ; they dwelt undisturbed among their conquerors ; and it was probably to regulate the relations of the two races on the border he had won that Offa drew up the code which bore his name.[1]

Mercia and Wessex. In the central, as in the northern realm, attacks on the Britons marked the close of all dreams of supremacy over the English themselves. Under Offa Mercia sank into virtual isolation. As we shall see, he cherished to the very close of his life the hope of restoring in its fulness the older realm of Central Britain by the recovery of East-Anglia ; but he abstained from any effort to extend his supremacy over the two rival kingdoms. The anarchy into which Northumbria sank after Eadberht's death never tempted him to cross the Humber ; nor was

[1] The code is lost, but is mentioned by Ælfred in his Laws. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws and Institut." vol. i. p. 59.

he shaken from his inaction by as tempting an opportunity which presented itself across the Thames. Their new strength had not drawn the West-Saxons from their attitude of isolation; though they were ready to defend their independence against Mercian attack, their aggressive force, like that of Offa or Northumbria, was turned not against their fellow-Englishmen but against the Welsh. It must have been during the years which followed on the battle of Burford that they made themselves masters of that part of what remained of the shrunken kingdom of Dyvnaint which still retains its old name in the form of Devon, and pushed their frontier from the Exe and the Tone, where Ine had left it, as far westward as the Tamar. But in 786 their progress was stayed by a fresh outbreak of anarchy. Their king Cynewulf was slain by the brother of a king whom he had himself driven from the throne,[1] and the succession of his son Beorhtric was disputed by Ecgberht, a descendant like Ine of Ceawlin, and thus a representative of the rival line of the house of Cerdic. The strife ended in Ecgberht's defeat and in his flight to Offa's court; but the Mercian King used his presence not so much to further schemes of aggrandizement as to bring about a peaceful connexion with his turbulent neighbours, and three years later Beorhtric purchased Ecgberht's expulsion from Mercia by taking Offa's daughter, Eadburh, to wife.[2]

At this moment indeed Offa was bent on a project which pointed to the purpose of making the threefold division of Britain a permanent basis of its political

Arch-bishoprick of Lichfield.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 784 (6).   [2] Eng. Chron. a. 787 (9).

order. This was the erection of a third archbishoprick. Theodore's design of gathering into one the whole English Church round the centre of Canterbury had already in part broken down ; for when Northumbria abandoned the hope of a national supremacy and withdrew into provincial isolation, she raised the see of York into a new archbishoprick. Offa now followed its example. The mission of two Papal legates to Britain in 786 [1] was the result of urgent letters from the King ; and in a synod held under their presidency in the following year Lichfield was raised into an arch-bishoprick with the bishops of Mercia and East Anglia for its suffragans.[2] After-tradition was probably right in looking on this measure as intended mainly to lessen the power of Canterbury, where the primates were becoming a centre of Kentish resistance to the Mercian overlordship. Left with only four suffragans, the Bishops of Rochester and London, of Selsey and Winchester,[3] the see of Augustine must have sunk into the weakest and least important of the three primacies between which Britain was now divided. But both ecclesiastically and politically Offa's act pointed to far wider issues than this. It brought England into new and more direct relations with Rome. Roman legates were called to remould the fabric of the English Church, and the Papal sanction was met by a pledge on Offa's part that he and his

[1] Sim. Dunelm. de Gest. Reg. a. 786.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 785 (really 787). Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," etc. vol. iii. 443 et seq. for documents of this mission, and valuable notes.

[3] Malm. Gest. Reg. (Hardy), i. 119.

successors would pay year by year a sum both for
alms and lights to the see of St. Peter. Its political
results promised to be even weightier. Had this
threefold division remained stamped on the English
Church, it would hardly have failed to strengthen the
threefold division which seemed to be stamping itself
on the English nation. The effect of its separate
primacy in strengthening the isolation of the north
was seen at a later day in the difficulty with which
this part of England was brought into political
union with the rest, whether by the sword of Eadred
or of William the Norman. Had the Archbishoprick
of Lichfield proved a more lasting one, it could hardly
have been less effective in strengthening the isolation
of Mid-Britain, and in throwing a fresh hindrance
in the way of any fusion of Englishmen into a
single people.

All Offa in fact aimed at was the union of Mid-
Britain, of the land between Humber and Thames,
with its Kentish outlet, under the Mercian crown;
and even in this aim he was still foiled by the re-
sistance of East-Anglia. Not only was he hampered in
any larger projects of aggrandizement by the dread
of the West-Saxons, but he was forced to watch
jealously a power which had risen to a dangerous
greatness over sea. The results of the action of
Boniface and his fellow missionaries had been rapidly
developing themselves through the reign of Offa, and
the power of the Franks had now risen to a height
which made them supreme in the Western world.
After a short interval of divided sovereignty on the
death of Pippin, his son Charles, so well known in

after days as Charles the Great, won full possession
of the Frankish throne.   The policy of Charles to-
wards the English kingdoms remained as friendly as
that of his father.   The political incidents of the
new reign indeed made English friendship more need-
ful than ever to the Franks, for the two peoples
whose hostility threatened them with immediate war
were both linked in different ways to Englishmen.
In their German home the Lombards had been close
neighbours of the conquerors of Britain, and the
similarity of their dress, the identity of many of
the Lombard and English names, as well as chance
marriages of Lombard Kings with Englishwomen
point to closer bonds between the peoples than those
of mere neighbourhood.   Nor had Englishmen for-
gotten that the Saxons of the Continent, with whom
Charles was now about to open the most terrible con-
test of his reign, were the stock from which they
sprang, though their zeal for the Christianization of
their kindred was strong enough to overpower the
more natural sympathy with them in their struggle
for freedom against the sword of the Frank.   But
this common religious interest on the Saxon Shore
was not the only bond which drew Frank and
Englishman together.   A common political interest
revealed itself in their relations with the Celtic
peoples on either side the Channel.   Among the most
harassing troubles of the Franks was the restless
craving of the Bretons for freedom ; and the struggle
of the Bretons against the Franks found echoes in
the struggle of their Welsh brethren in Britain against
the English kingdoms.   Offa was bridling the inroads

of the central Welshmen, Wessex was slowly pressing
westward on those of Dyvnaint, at the moment
when the bravest of the Frank warriors found
endless work in stamping out again and again the
unquenchable fire of revolt among the Celts of
Britanny.

The scanty details which we possess of intercourse *Charles*
between Charles and the English kingdoms point *and Offa.*
to a policy which would naturally be dictated by
these common interests. His friendship with the
Northumbrian scholar, Alcuin, who joined him in
782, naturally drew Charles into close relations with
Northern Britain; but his missions and remon-
strances in this quarter seem at first to have aimed
simply at checking the anarchy of Northumbria.
With Offa—if we judge from the fragments of their
correspondence which remain, rather than from later
traditions—the relations of Charles were equally
friendly.[1] He may have striven to save Kent from
his grasp, and threatening letters from the Frank-
ish court may have met the Mercian on his march
into the province.[2] But if so, Offa's disregard of
them was followed by no act of more direct in-
tervention. At the moment, indeed, of the re-
conquest of Kent the hands of Charles were tied
by dangers nearer home. It was no time to pro-
vide a quarrel in his rear when he was marching

[1] In a letter written in 796, or at the close of Offa's life,
Charles speaks of their "antiqui inter nos pacti," as well as
of the constant correspondence between them, "epistolis, quæ
diversis siquidem temporibus per missorum vestrorum manus
delatæ sunt." Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 496.

[2] This is only mentioned by the supposititious "Vita Offæ."

to his final struggle with the Lombards, and threatened with the opening of a struggle far sterner and more lasting with the Saxons of the Elbe. In the years which followed, indeed, the power of the Frankish king reached a height which made any hostility from England of less moment to him. While Offa was mastering Kent, Charles put an end to the monarchy of the Lombards, and added the bulk of Italy to the Frankish realm. While the Mercian king drove the Welsh from the Severn, Charles was driving the Saxons in thousands to baptism in the Lippe, and carrying his border over the Pyrenees to the Elbe. At the moment when Ecgberht made his way to the Frankish court, its king had become master of a realm which stretched from Britanny to the mountains of Bohemia, and from Zaragoza to the mouth of the Elbe. But immense as was his power, Charles was still careful to keep up good relations with the English kingdom, and the care with which at this time he informed Offa of the progress of Christianity among the old Saxons proves that he looked upon him as a useful ally.

Relations of Charles with England.   But friendly as was the general tenor of the King's policy, Offa shrank cautiously from any connexion which might imply a recognition of Frankish supremacy. When Charles in 788 demanded the hand of one of the Mercian king's daughters for his son Charles, Offa demanded in return the hand of a daughter of Charles for his son Ecgberht ; and so stung was Charles by this claim of equality that he closed for a while his ports against English traffic till the mediation of Alcuin reconciled the two

sovereigns.[1]   But Offa had good grounds for his

caution.   The costly gifts which Charles despatched
from time to time to the monasteries of England as of
Ireland showed his will to obtain an influence in both
countries : through Alcwine he maintained relations
with Northumbria : through Archbishop Æthelheard
he maintained relations not only with Kent but with
the whole English Church.   Above all he harboured
at his court exiles from every English realm.   Exiled
kings of Northumbria made their way to Aachen or
Nimeguen ; East-Anglian thegns sought a refuge there
after the conquest of their realm ;[2] and at the close of
Offa's life in 796 Charles was still sheltering a priest,
Odberht, who had left England on pretext of pilgrim-
age, but, as the Mercian king believed, to make false
charges against him, as well as other exiles, " who
through fear of death have fled to our protection." [3]
There too Ecgberht, the claimant of the West-Saxon
throne, had found a refuge since Offa's league with
Beorhtric in 787.

The years which Ecgberht spent at the court of *Ecgberht*
Charles were years of the highest moment in the history *at the*
Frankish
of the world.   Master of the whole German people *Court.*
across the Channel, the Frankish King threw the
weight of his new power on the Sclavonic and Tartar
nations which were pressing on its rear ; and that
eastward movement of the Teutonic race, which was to

[1] See an examination of this story in Lappenberg, Ang. Sax.
i. 293.

[2] Charles to Archbishop Æthelheard.   Stubbs and Haddan,
" Councils," iii. 487, with note.

[3] Charles to Offa, Stubbs and Haddan, iii. 497.

found the two great German powers of the present day in the marches of Brandenburg and Austria, began in the campaigns of Charles against the Avars and the Wends. But Charles was now to be more than a German king. His greatness had reached a height which revived in men's minds the memory of Rome : his repulse of the heathen world, which was pressing on from the east, marked him out for the head and champion of Christendom ; and on Christmas Day, 800, the shouts of the people and priesthood of Rome, hailed him as Roman Emperor. Ecgberht had probably marched in the train of the Frankish king to the Danube and the Tiber ; he may have witnessed the great event which changed the face of the world ; and it was in the midst of the peace which followed it, while the new Emperor was yet nursing hopes of a recognition in the East as in the West, which would have united the whole world again under a Roman rule, that the death of Beorhtric opened a way for the exile's return to Wessex.

Britain and the Empire. The years that had passed since his flight had made little change in the state of Britain. In 794 Offa had at last been enabled to complete his realm in Mid-Britain by the murder of the East-Anglian king, Æthelberht, and the seizure of his land ;[1] but from that moment to his death in 796 he was occupied in the founding of what was destined to be one of the greatest of English abbeys on a spot hallowed by the death of St. Alban near the ruins of the Roman Verulamium, and in dealing with a fresh Kentish revolt. The revolt was only quelled by his successor,

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 792 (4).

BRITAIN IN 792.

Scale of Miles.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

NORTHUMBRIA

OFFA'S SUPREMACY

North Welsh

Lindiswar

Middle Engle

Gyrwas

East Englia

Hecana

WYRE

OFFAS

Magesætas

Merctins

ARDEN

Hwiccan

Essex

St. Albans

Middle Sexe

Surrey

Kent

Taunton

WEST SAXON SUPREMACY

SELWOOD

Sussex

Dyvnaint

CHAP. VIII. Cenwulf.[1] Cenwulf secured the co-operation of the

The Three Kingdoms. Kentish Primate in this work by a pledge to sup-

690- 829. press the Mercian Archbishoprick; and in 803 Lichfield sank again into a suffragan see to the successors of Augustine.[2] But there was still no attempt to carry further the supremacy of Mercia. The history, indeed, of the Midland kingdom is at this point little more than a blank. All dreams of ambition at home must in fact have been hushed in the sense of a common danger, as men followed step by step the progress of the new ruler of Western Christendom. Charles had remained to the last on terms of peace and friendship with Offa;[3] but the death of the Mercian king, the war of Mercia with Kent, and the murder of King Æthelred by the Northumbrian thegns, afforded in 796 an opening for intervention, which seems only to have been averted by the persuasion of Alcuin.[4] The danger, though staved off for the time, must have deepened to English minds when four years later Charles mounted the Imperial throne. His coronation as Emperor had a mean-

[1] In 798. Eng. Chron. a. 796.

[2] For letters of Cenwulf and Leo III. on this matter see Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," 521, 523. For final act of the council which did away with the archbishoprick, ibid. p. 542.

[3] Letters of Charles and Alcuin to Offa in 796. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 496, 498.

[4] On the news of the murder " Carolus .'. . in tantum iratus est contra gentem illam, ut ait, perfidam et perversam, et homicidam dominorum suorum, pejorem eam paganis existimat; ut, nisi ego intercessor essem pro eâ, quicquid eis boni abstrahere potuisset et mali machinari, jam fecisset." Alcuin to Offa, between April and July 796. Haddan and Stubbs, " Councils," iii. 498.

ing for the English states which we are apt
to forget. Britain had been lost to the Empire
in the hour when the rest of the Western provinces
were lost; and to men of that day it would
seem natural enough that she should return to
the Empire now that Rome had risen again to
more than its old greatness in the West. Such
a return, we can hardly doubt, was in the mind
of Charles; and the revolutions which were dis-
tracting the English kingdoms told steadily towards
it. When in 802 [1] Ecgberht left the court of
Charles and mounted the West-Saxon throne,
Cenwulf stood silently by : and the peace which he
maintained with the new ruler of Wessex through-
out his reign suggests that this restoration had
been brought about by diplomatic arrangement
between the Emperor and the Mercian king.[2] Six
years later a new step forward in the assertion
of this supremacy was made by the new Empire.
In 808 [3] the Northumbrian king, Eardwulf, who
had two years before been driven from his throne
by a revolt of his subjects, appealed both to Pope
and Emperor, and was brought back and restored
to his throne by their envoys.[4]

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 800.

[2] It is possible that Cenwulf may have been hampered by a
strife with Eardwulf of Northumbria about harbouring of exiles,
which Simeon of Durham places in 801. Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg.
a. 801.

[3] Sim. Durh. Hist. Dun. Ecc. ii. 5; Eng. Chron. (Peter-
borough) a. 806.

[4] Eginhard. Annal. a. 808. "Rex Nordhanhambrorum de
Britanniâ insulâ, nomine Eardulf, regno et patria pulsus, ad

CHAP. VIII.

The Three
Kingdoms.

690-
829.

*Conquest
of
Cornwall.*

But though we are thus told of the assertion ot the Imperial supremacy in northern Britain, of the relations between Charles and the exile who had quitted his protection to become king of the West-Saxons we know nothing. The stay of Ecgberht at the Frankish court had left, as his after policy shows, a marked impression on him, and we may believe that the friendship which we find existing in later days between the West-Saxon house and that of Charles the Great had already begun. The first political enterprise of the new king at any rate was one which Charles himself might have suggested. The Bretons of Britanny were among the standing troubles of the Frankish realm, as the Britons of West-Wales were the standing trouble of the West-Saxon. A blow at the one was in great measure a blow at the other; and Lewis the Gentle, who in 814 succeeded his father Charles in the Imperial throne, must have looked on with approval as strife between the sprinkling of Englishmen who had recently settled in Devon and the Welsh who still held their ground across the Tamar grew into a war which in 815 forced Ecgberht to march into the heart of Cornwall.[1] After eight years of fighting his attack proved successful; the last fragment of British dominion in the west came to an end; and the whole of Dyvnaint owned the supremacy of the West-Saxon king. The conquest of

Imperatorem dum adhuc Noviomagi moraretur venit, et patefacto adventus sui negotio, Romam proficiscitur, Româque rediens per legatos Romani Pontificis et domini Imperatoris in regnum suum reducitur." See Letters of Leo III. in Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 562—565.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 813, 823.

Cornwall marks a fresh stage in the long warfare between Briton and Englishman. As a nation Britain had passed away with the victories of Deorham and Chester: what was left were four British peoples, the Britons of Cornwall, of Central Wales, of Cumbria, and of Strath-Clyde. In the two hundred years which had elapsed since Æthelfrith's victory, three of these

SOUTH WESTERN BRITAIN

Roman names   GLEAVUM
English   ,,   DEORHAM
Modern   ,,   Amesbury

English Miles.
0 5 10   20   30   40

Stanford's Geographical Estabᵗ
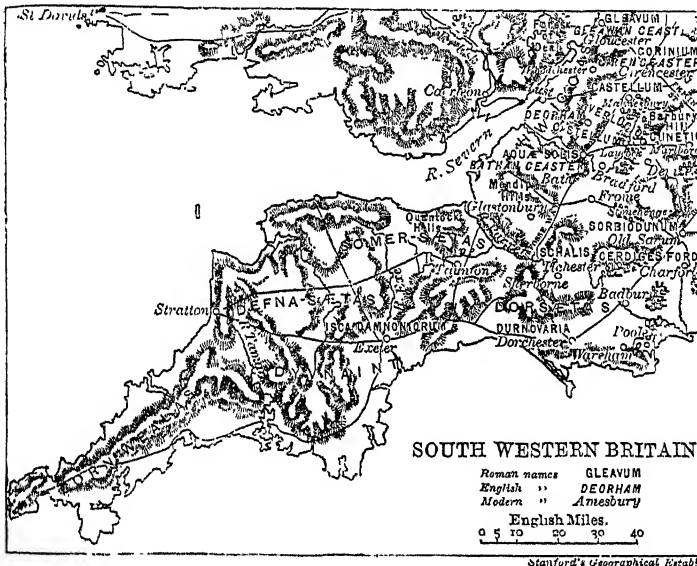
had bowed to the English sway. Ecgfrith had put an end to the independence of Cumbria. Under Eadberht Northumbria had brought her strife with Strath-Clyde to a close by the subjection of these northern Britons and the capture of Alcluyd. In Central Wales Offa's conquest of the tract between the Severn and the Dyke had been followed by a payment of tribute on the part of the chieftains to the westward of it, which

F F

was a practical acknowledgment of their submission to the Mercian crown. Ecgberht's campaign brought the long struggle to an end by the reduction of the one British state which still remained unconquered ; and the Britons of the south-western peninsula, after the successive losses of Somerset and Devon, saw the West-Saxons masters of their last strongholds from the Tamar to the Land's End.

*Conquest
of
Mercia.*

But the winning of West-Wales was the smallest result of Ecgberht's victories. The dread of Welsh hostility in their rear had formed till now the main check on any advance of the West-Saxons against their English neighbours ; and not only was this check removed by the reduction of Cornwall, but it was removed at a moment when its internal condition allowed Wessex to take advantage of the liberty of action which it had gained, and when the civil discord which had so long torn the kingdom in pieces was hushed beneath the firm rule of Ecgberht. While Wessex too regained the strength it had lost through the past two centuries, its rival in Central Britain sank helplessly into the anarchy from which the southern kingdom had emerged. On Cenwulf's death [1] in 821 Mercia was torn with civil war ; and the weakness this left behind it was seen when his successor took up the long interrupted strife with the West-Saxons. The war in Dyvnaint was hardly over when Beornwulf in 825 marched into Wiltshire. But the decisive repulse of his army at Ellandur [2] was the signal for a break up of the Mercian realm. All England south of the Thames submitted to the West-

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 819.   [2] Eng. Chron. a. 823.

Saxon King;[1] the East-Saxons over the river owned the rule of Wessex; and in Kent Ecgberht was able to set aside a native king who had seized its throne in the hour of Mercia's defeat. Others were doing his work in Mid-Britain itself. The overthrow of Ellandun was followed by a desperate rising against Beornwulf's sway along the eastern coast. Mercia, spent by its earlier overthrow, was utterly exhausted by two victories of the East-Anglians; two of its kings in succession fell fighting on East-Anglian soil;[2] and a third, Wiglaf, had hardly mounted the throne when Ecgberht saw that the hour had come for a decisive onset. In 828 the West-Saxon army crossed the Thames; Wiglaf fled helplessly before it; and the realm of Penda and of Offa bowed without a struggle to its conqueror.

Submission of Northumbria.

But Ecgberht had wider dreams of conquest than those of supremacy over Mercia alone; and setting an under-king on its throne, he marched in the following year to the attack of Northumbria. In the silence of her annals we know not why the realm which seventy years before had beaten back Æthelbald, and which had since carried its conquests to the Clyde, now yielded without a blow to Ecgberht's summons. The weariness of half a century of anarchy had no doubt done much to break the spirit of northern independence, while terror of the pirates who were harrying the Northumbrian coast may have strengthened the dim longing for internal unity which was growing up under the influence of the Church. But whatever may have been the causes of their action, the

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[1] Eng. Chron. a. 823.   [2] Eng. Chron. a 823, 825.

Northumbrian thegns met Ecgberht on their border, at Dore, in Derbyshire, and owned him as their over-lord.[1] There is something startling in so quiet and uneventful a close to the struggles of two hundred years. For with the submission of Northumbria the work that Oswiu and Æthelbald had failed to do was done. In a revolution which seemed sudden, but which was in reality the inevitable close of the growth of natural consciousness through these centuries of English history, the old severance of people from people had at last been broken down ; and the whole English race in Britain was for the first time knit together under a single ruler. Though the legend which made Ecgberht take the title of King of England is an invention of later times, it expressed an historic truth. Long and bitter as the struggle for separate existence was still to be in Mid-Britain and the North, it was a struggle that never wholly undid the work which his sword had done ; and from the moment when the Northumbrian thegns bowed to their West-Saxon over-lord, England was made in fact if not as yet in name.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 827.

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